1. THE AUTHOR

FINNEY
ON FOOTBALL

by

TOM FINNEY

as told to

DAVID R. JACK

*

WITH 37 PHOTOGRAPHS

*

IN THE CITY OF LONDON

NICHOLAS KAYE

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CHAPTER 1

World Cup 1958 . . . a penalty kick I did not want to take . . . the 'real' story of Bobby Charlton . . . the fabulous Brazilians.

THE day was Sunday 29th June 1958; the time about 2.30 in the afternoon. I was sitting in a semi-darkened room at my Preston home with one or two friends, waiting to watch a football match. Yes, on this particular occasion, I was one of those armchair critics who see their soccer in comfort, through a magic box of tricks called a television set. I don't mind watching football on TV. I would much rather see the real thing: but, at times, I feel television, though admittedly nothing better than a substitute, provides the public with a wonderful service—especially if your viewer happens to be a football enthusiast and the World Cup is being played within camera range! This was such a time. The 1958 World Cup Final was about to be screened—with Brazil and Sweden meeting before a packed house in Stockholm, 800 miles away.

My friend turned to me and prophesied, 'The Swedes will murder 'em.' I said, 'Don't talk stupid.' Then, explaining his extraordinary pre-match summing-up, he explained, 'These Brazilians play like a bunch of fairies.' I agreed with him but, at the same time, asked him if at any time he had tried to catch a fairy!

He remained unconvinced, so I took what to me seemed a courageous step when I said, 'I'm willing to bet you £5 that Brazil beat Sweden this afternoon.' He compromised and offered an even-money five bob on Sweden, so the gambling session was over. The significance of all this is the fact that I am not a gambler. Apart from an occasional half-crown each way on a horse in the Grand National, or the Derby, I'm very happy to leave gambling to gamblers.

My reason for telling this story is not, as may be thought, a desire to point out that I made an accurate forecast before the final of the World Cup. I tell it because my friend's summing-up of the Brazilian team is so typical of many Englishmen's assessment of these wizards in football boots, these artists

from the new world; players who, in my honest opinion, must henceforth be regarded as the new masters of Association Football.

Let us be honest, now. Brazilians, Argentinians, Uruguayans, Paraguayans, and the rest of the South American teams, have been underrated as world-class soccer opponents. We have tended, unforgivably, to regard these Latins as figures of football fun: we have sneered at their temperamental outbursts, their tears in victory and defeat, the exuberance so frequently displayed without inhibition—as when a Brazilian goal-scorer against Russia (in this recent World Cup tournament) followed the ball into the net and clawed his way up into the rigging, like a monkey in a tree on the banks of the Amazon. Those stories will be told for years. They will fetch their quota of laughs. But, soberly, it must be admitted that the joke is over. We have had our fun. Brazil are champions of the world and England are also-rans. I feel there is little cause for frivolity at the moment.

I did not play against Brazil in the World Cup. That was a great disappointment to me, but injury, which has so often caused me to miss so many wonderful games during my twenty-one years in football, ruled me out of the tremendously interesting Brazil *v.* England affair in Gothenburg.

That was particularly disappointing because I had also been forced to withdraw from the previous Brazil *v.* England match at Wembley Stadium in 1956. Some footballers manage to go through their whole footballing lives without missing more than an occasional match: I wish I were as fortunate.

For obvious tactical reasons, international players do not broadcast to the world information about injuries. It is assumed, rightly or wrongly, that once a player discovers that his opponent has a wonky knee, that knee will probably become even 'wonkier' after the first physical contact on the field.

My World Cup injury was collected in the very first match. Even now, I do not know when, or how, it happened. I do recollect being bumped several times by a Russian called Kessarev, and quite obviously one of the bumps from Mr Kessarev—or the accumulation of several—had done the damage.

After the match I felt well enough, but during dinner, my right leg stiffened up and I knew I was in for trouble. I had an early night to bed, but it was not a comfortable night. There was considerable pain around my knee, and when I attempted to go

to the bathroom in the morning—a journey of about eight yards —I was a full five minutes getting there.

Dressing was comparatively simple, seated on the bed and assisted occasionally by my Lancashire room mate, Tommy Banks of Bolton Wanderers, but the real struggle began when I felt ready for breakfast, with the long descent to the restaurant in our hotel before me.

I do not exaggerate when I say I was ten minutes negotiating a couple of dozen steps on the final stage of my ordeal by limp, and all the time I was hoping there would be no newspaper reporters up and about so early in the morning. I reached ground level and came face to face with, of all people, Vernon Morgan who, as the representative of Reuters Agency, sends his dispatches not to one newspaper, but to hundreds!

'Good morning, Tom. How are you?' enquired Vernon.

'I feel fine, thanks,' I told him, hoping he wouldn't notice that I was standing on one leg and experiencing excruciating pain in the other.

'Good,' said Vernon. 'For a moment I thought you were limping.'

The secret, however, could not be kept for long. Even though team manager Walter Winterbottom and trainer Harold Shepherdson were assuring all enquirers that my injury was 'nothing serious', the fact that I was confined to my room on that Monday afternoon, and had to go to a local hospital for treatment, soon became common knowledge. I had no idea at that time, even though I was very worried, that I had played my last game in World Cup soccer . . . at least until 1962.

On the Tuesday there was a big improvement and, although I felt there was no hope of recovery in time to turn out against Brazil on the next day, I had every reason for optimism about my chances of getting well again for England's third game on the following Sunday, when we were due to meet Austria.

Wednesday morning came, and with it another step forward as far as the Finney knee was concerned—so much so that I decided to have a pre-match test just in case the injury had recovered sufficiently for me to play that evening. The test was a flop. Walter Winterbottom and Harold Shepherdson took a few balls on to the pitch and I started lapping. The steady jogging around that Gothenburg ground was easy, yet whenever I tried to accelerate or lengthen my stride, I felt a sharp pain in the right knee. A

brief discussion with Walter and Harold put an end to the test. I did not kick a ball. I was out. Much to my regret, I was denied the opportunity of meeting the favourites for the 1958 World Cup.

It is often alleged that professional footballers—especially the 'big name men'—are slightly cynical, or even unenthusiastic about playing in vital matches: indeed I have often heard tales about so-and-so hoping he would not be playing against a certain individual, or team, in case he had an indifferent game. I am not built that way. I was bitterly disappointed about being denied the chance of testing my skill against Brazil's wonderful right-back Nilton De Sordi from the Sao Paulo club. If England lost, we were virtually out of the World Cup. If we won, we were well on the way to the quarter-final stage.

There was the usual team talk on the day of the match, and here I must pay a tribute to England coach Billy Nicholson for his masterly summing-up of the opposition. Bill had watched Brazil in their opening game against Austria, and although he had been impressed, he felt the Brazilians could be beaten—providing an inside-forward called Waldir Pereira were subdued from the start. The name Pereira may mean nothing to World Cup TV followers, but if I call him by his adopted nickname 'Didi', it can be appreciated why Billy Nicholson had such a healthy respect for his talents.

Briefly England's plan was to 'allocate' Bill Slater to Didi—a task he performed admirably even though it had to be done at the expense of Slater's normal game—and to have full-backs Don Howe and Tommy Banks playing nearer the centre of the field than usual, in case Brazil's excellent centre-forward Mazzola should manage to give Billy Wright the slip. At the same time, our wingers Bryan Douglas and Alan A'Court were to lie deep, to do a semi-defensive job.

It is to Bill Nicholson's credit that these tactics worked like a charm. Didi had probably his poorest game of the tournament, and largely because of that, Brazil's forward line seldom moved as well as the many South Americans in Gothenburg anticipated it would.

This particular match seems to have been the cause of much animosity between the football writers (who were actually at the Uleevi Stadium) and the television watchers (whose view of the game must have been influenced, to some extent, by the commentary which accompanied the picture on their screens).

The 0—0 result was acclaimed in the Press as a magnificent achievement by England, and most of the reporters were in exceptionally charitable mood as they wrote with lavish praise of 'England's eleven white-shirted heroes'. On the other hand, the general impression at home was that England were a very fortunate team to have survived after being completely outclassed by a Brazilian XI which tore us to shreds.

What, then, is the truth? Before answering that question, I must point out that every man has his own opinion, his individual assessment of a game, his idea, in fact, of what is good and what is not so good.

In my opinion, this was a very enjoyable game of football. The result was obviously a great one for England considering the team we fielded, and the strength of the opposition. There was a most fascinating contrast of styles, particularly in the defensive set-up, with Brazil relying on a 4—2—4 line-up and England playing the more orthodox 2—3—5. It was a match we could so easily have won, because at least three excellent chances were there for the taking: it was a match we could have lost, and in fact, only the brilliance of Colin McDonald in the England goal saved us on more than one occasion when Brazil found holes in the strong English defence.

I particularly liked Brazil's inside-forward trio of Didi, Mazzola, and Vava: it is as well that Bill Slater followed Didi so conscientiously. He did not give the black magician an inch of room in which to practise his sorcery.

Why did Brazil, who crushed such great teams as France and Sweden, fail to score a single goal against England? How is it that England who, if we are to be quite honest, were not as adept at football as many of the World Cup participants, were the only side to play Brazil and escape defeat? One reason, of course, has already been mentioned: our defensive tactics proved to be more effective than those employed by other nations who met Brazil. Another reason which should be mentioned, if only in fairness to Russia, Wales, France, and Sweden, is that changes were made in Brazil's team after two matches had been played. These changes undoubtedly made Brazil a better side, because they meant the introduction of the 17-year-old goal-scoring wonder boy Pele at inside-left, and 'Stanley Matthews' double', the fantastic Garincha, on the right-wing. By the same token, however, Mazzola was seldom heard of after playing against England—and many

regard him as the finest forward in Brazilian soccer: in fact Mazzola moved to Italy for £65,000 after the Tournament.

Yet, all things considered, I feel Brazil's comparative failure in the England match was due to temperament as much as to any of the reasons mentioned above. In the first half, Brazil played well—but could not score. They were frustrated as a team, and individually. When an artist like Didi, used to putting on exhibitions as and when he pleases, finds himself in the chorus instead of playing principal boy, his vanity takes a caning. In short, Brazil were not clicking—and that is a most unusual state of affairs for these maestros.

So it was that a change came over this match in the second half. Brazil were disconsolate, annoyed with themselves, hopelessly searching for the spark of inspiration which could not be found. For once the fairies were wearing gumboots!

That was England's signal to come into the game. Perhaps we lacked the subtlety of ball control, the gentle, yet devastating, man-to-man passing and the eel-like movement in anticipation of the ball which always arrives. But at a time when a team's very survival in a tournament is the primary concern, such things are forgotten. Using our own methods, quite unlike those of the Brazilians, we gradually moved from hard-pressed defence into very determined attack, and at the end of ninety minutes, I am quite certain Brazil were every bit as pleased as England when the colossal Mr Dusch from West Germany blew his whistle to call a halt to the proceedings. I consider England won a tactical victory, knowing we could not match Brazil for pure football.

As a spectator, I found myself developing into a critic: from the trainer's bench it is simple enough to play a storming game—knowing just what the lads are doing wrong and deciding how much better I would be doing it! On the field it is a different matter, and my 1958 World Cup experience as a player was confined to one match only—but what a match it was. England *v.* Russia in Gothenburg attracted 49,000 spectators, a remarkable turn-out considering that, on the face of it, the crowd owed allegiance to neither side, and as neutrals, should not have been terribly concerned about the result. But they were. We could not have played before a more partisan crowd. They were on our side from the word 'Go'—as good as a home crowd.

This was one of the hardest matches in which I have played, because Russia—much underrated by many English critics—

proved themselves to be formidable foes who had apparently discovered the knack of blending Continental-type artistic soccer with the harder approach favoured by British teams. Pre-match assessments of the Russians were based on a meeting between Russia and England in Moscow three weeks previously. On that occasion the Reds showed us nothing, and one could hardly blame the British football writers for expecting England to win this first match of the big competition.

We were soon disillusioned. For a full hour, the England forward line looked like novices, and as one of those forwards, I take full responsibility for the part I played. By this time Russia were leading 2—0: what is more they were very good value for that lead. Then Russia made what I consider to be a major blunder. As England fought back, the Russians—in the terms of the terrace fan—'started dishing it out.' Just when they should have been confidently rubbing in their undoubted superiority, and making the match an exhibition of scientific Soviet soccer, they turned it into a rough house. They tripped, they pushed, and they kicked. In other words they lost their heads, and once that happens, any team which can retain its poise and dignity must have a decided advantage. The much-criticized Derek Kevan made the score 2—1 when he climbed to head a ball while the Russians stood still and watched him.

England were now back in the game. I thought we had equalized when I centred from the left-wing for Bobby Robson to put the ball into the net. The referee Mr Istvan Zsolt (Hungary) refused to allow the goal, because he thought Derek Kevan had fouled the giant Russian goalkeeper Yashin, but even now, reliving that incident, I am convinced Mr Zsolt should have awarded a goal. Yashin completely missed my centre, so he threw himself at Kevan, but Derek, too, had failed to connect. If any foul was committed, it was the Russian who should have been penalized; but Continental referees will invariably give free kicks against forwards who have bodily contact with goalkeepers. It is all a matter of rules interpretation, and had the incident occurred during a Football League game, the goal would probably have been allowed.

Panic now gripped the Russian defence. Whenever we attacked, their stopping methods were completely out of character with the type of sporting conduct expected from these normally well-behaved Soviet footballers. With six minutes left for play, and

England again on the attack, Johnny Haynes was unceremoniously, and quite unnecessarily, flattened in the penalty area with a push in the back. There was no danger, but referee Zsolt was quite right to point to the penalty spot. It was not a vicious foul. Rather was it a silly, petulant, one. But a foul in the penalty area deserves the only possible punishment, regardless of the circumstances.

There followed an extraordinary scene. Yashin rushed out and caught hold of Mr Zsolt, spinning the referee around and looking for all the world as if he were about to do a Floyd Patterson on the struggling Hungarian. Then Yashin deliberately threw his cap at the referee; fortunately (for Yashin) it was a poor shot, otherwise he must surely have been dismissed from the field.

I have often heard the opinion expressed that any footballer who misses a penalty kick should have his wages docked for a week. Up to a point I would agree that penalties should always mean goals, but before being too dogmatic about it, just imagine how the crowd, the tense atmosphere, and the desperate necessity to score can play havoc with the penalty taker's nerves. A footballer who takes a penalty kick is on a hiding to nothing: it is a thankless job. And it was my job in the England team.

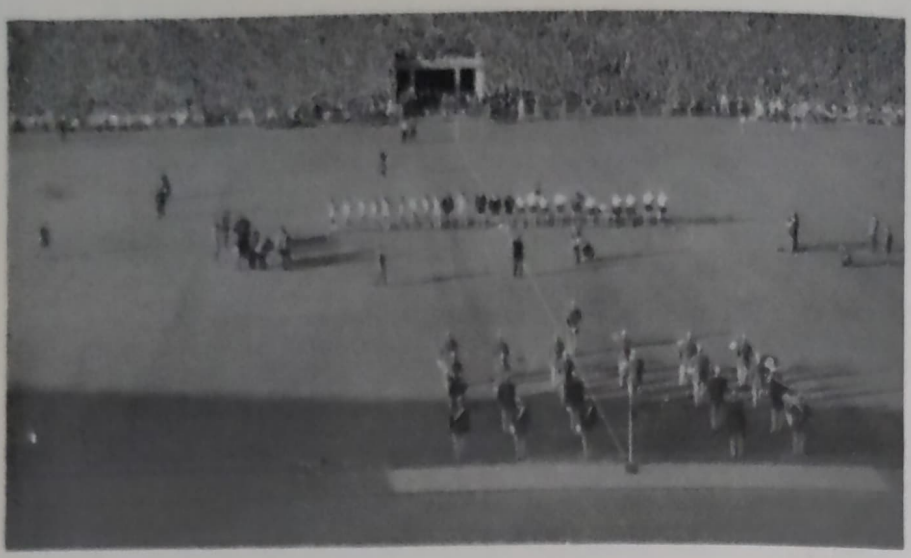
While all the Yashin-Zsolt commotion was in full swing, I was worrying about taking that penalty kick. Which side of the goalkeeper should I aim for? Should I 'hit' the ball or place it? I saw our right-back Don Howe running up the field towards the penalty area, bouncing the ball as he ran. Was this to be a reprieve for me? I asked Don, 'Are you taking it (I hope)?' He said, 'No, Tom, it's all yours.'

Eventually Yashin, still minus cap, allowed me to place the ball on the spot, and trudged back to his goal muttering all the time in his native tongue, and with no interpreter present, I assumed he was suggesting that Istvan Zsolt wasn't exactly the best referee in the world!

Carefully examining the stance taken up by Yashin . . . he was exactly in the middle of the goal . . . I decided to use my right foot and pull the ball to the goalkeeper's right. The tension was terrible. I knew that Tom Finney from Preston could either keep England in the 1958 World Cup or see us half-way out of it after only one day in Sweden. I ran up, hit the ball, and it went exactly where it was intended to go. What a wonderful feeling as I saw the net bulge!

2. (*Top*) The two Bobby's, Charlton (left) and Robson (right) in World Cup training. The selection of Robson at inside-right in place of Charlton caused a soccer controversy which still rages

3. (*Bottom*) This goal, scored from the penalty spot by Tom Finney, is probably the most vital one he has ever scored. It came a few minutes before the end of England's first World Cup game against Russia, and gave England a 2—2 draw. Goalkeeper Yashin dived the right way—but too late



4. (*Top*) The big game in which Tom Finney could not play. England and Brazil line up for National Anthems before the start of their World Cup tie in Gothenburg

5. (*Bottom*) Finney shows football writer David Jack why he had to miss the Brazilian match . . . pointing to a troublesome knee injury that kept him out of action

6. (*Top*) Like all good tourists, the England players queue up in Red Square to file past the bodies of Lenin and Stalin. Finney is fifth in the queue!

7. (*Bottom left*) Within the walls of the Kremlin, Finney takes in the interesting scene with his cine camera

8. (*Bottom right*) Kids are kids the world over, as the author discovered when he had an audience of three Moscow boys watching him lace up his boots, before a training run-out

9. (*Top*) One of the great soccer grounds of the world . . . the 120,000-capacity Lenin Stadium in Moscow

10. (*Bottom*) During the first-ever Russia *v.* England international match, the author is obviously having difficulty with the obstruction of Soviet right-back, Ogonkov

My manager at Preston North End, Cliff Britton, may not realize it, but he played a part in that successful penalty conversion. Soon after the boss took over at Deepdale, he noticed that I always took penalty kicks with my left foot, and, one day, he asked me about it. 'Tell me, Tom, why do you use your left foot? I always thought you were a natural right-footer.' I explained that my natural foot was my left. The Preston boss, however, had an idea that I could be more effective from the spot with my right foot, and he persuaded me to try it, while at the same time, shortening my run up. Soon after, I took two penalties against Bolton Wanderers . . . both with my 'wrong' right foot. Each time the ball went straight and true into the top right-hand corner of the Bolton goal. Obviously the Britton advice had been good.

I must tell a story, which few people know . . . something of a postscript to that World Cup equalizing goal. As the England players left the field, applauded for one of the greatest recoveries in international football, Billy Wright came over to me and asked, 'In which corner of the goal did you put that ball?'

I said, 'Why? Didn't you watch it?' And Billy admitted, honestly, that he had turned to face his own goal as I ran up to take the kick. 'You surprise me, Bill. I thought you were past that kind of thing,' I told him, but that story does illustrate the sort of tension endured on the field by any player—no matter how experienced—in a vital match.

England's fight back was well received in Gothenburg. Perhaps the locals were pro-British, but I am rather inclined to put it down more to their being anti-Russian. These Russians seem to have few friends internationally, although their exhibition for the first hour against England did cause several soccer observers to fancy them as possible World Cup winners.

The English defence was given great credit (quite rightly) but our forwards brought little enthusiasm (again, quite rightly) from the locals in the after-match inquests on the game. About this time, there was considerable criticism of the England preparations for the tournament, especially the choice of headquarters at the Park Avenue Hotel in the centre of Gothenburg. The Russians and Brazilians were staying at health resorts at Hindus, some seventeen miles out of the city, and the Austrians, the other nation in our group, had chosen to move even twice as far away from the bright lights.

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I heard of some Austrian journalists who were informing everyone that the England players had come to Sweden for a holiday, that they spent all their spare time drifting around Gothenburg's night-clubs, that they were not worried if they won or lost, and that the whole bunch of us could be called 'bummeln', which apparently means some sort of Viennese street-corner spivs.

Without appreciating all the circumstances, the English decision to live in a sort of Savoy-Dorchester atmosphere in a built-up area of a big city, would appear to be ill-advised. However it is a fact that once we had completed our morning training on the Gothenburg club ground, just ten minutes walk from the hotel, all the players were taken by motor coach into the country, or the seaside, or to the local golf club, where the rest of the day was spent. Night life? It just did not exist for our lads. Without appearing too smug, I can assure the Austrians, and any others who imagine an England football team cannot be trusted, that they would need to search a long way to find a better-behaved crowd of sportsmen than our present international representatives.

Of course not every team could have taken the risk of settling in the midst of so many alleged temptations: as some Brazilian journalists told me, 'Many of the Brazil footballers come from poor homes, and their living standards are not to be compared with yours. Let them loose in Gothenburg at night, and that would be the end of Brazil in the tournament. Our players must be kept down, must be made to behave themselves. With you it's different. It seems to come automatically.' He was not intentionally flattering—merely stating a fact, as he saw it.

The open-air life is excellent in theory, but I know, from experience, that nothing is more soul-destroying than being confined to a lonely camp with nothing to do but write letters home and play cards. In town, an occasional evening at the pictures, or a stroll around the shops does no harm and is a great relief from monotony.

Whether or not England's World Cup venture would have been any more successful if a change had been made in our day-to-day routine, we shall never know. All things considered, I cannot think it would have made any difference. At any rate, we approached our third game, against Austria at Boras, a delightful little textile town, with two points from two really difficult matches. We knew that we would be practically certain to qualify for the

quarter-finals if we beat Austria, not a hard task on the face of it considering that Brazil and Russia had both beaten the Austrians.

On the morning of the game, I was supposed to have another fitness test, but I did not go through with it. The 'Russian knee' was still troubling me.

All that needs to be said about the England *v.* Austria match is that we missed the boat, missed a wonderful chance of going through to meet Sweden in the quarter-final. Although Austria were slightly superior as a footballing side in the first half, the England second-half pressure would certainly have given us victory had the ball run better for us. Once again, we had what appeared to be a perfectly good goal disallowed, but after being behind 0—1 and 1—2, I suppose we should have been satisfied with the 2—2 draw which went into the record book. By this time, the mystery about England's matches in Sweden was the odd way we reserved all our better efforts for the second half. Against Russia, Brazil and Austria, the English team had started like a Fourth Division side, and finished so strongly that all three games could have been won.

With Brazil (five points) already in the quarter-finals and Austria (one point) eliminated, England and Russia, with three points each, had to meet again in a play-off game in Gothenburg to decide which country should accompany the Brazilians as group qualifiers.

This was the biggest match of all. The winners stayed in Sweden, the losers returned on an early plane either to Moscow or to London. Changes were made in the England team (not before time in the opinion of the English Press men) with Ronnie Clayton taking over from Eddie Clamp, Peter Brabrook displacing Bryan Douglas, and Peter Broadbent getting Bobby Robson's job at inside-right.

For twenty-five minutes, Russia looked brilliant. Sitting on the bench, I felt we were going to be well beaten, but suddenly Peter Broadbent, playing in his first international, started bewitching the Russians with some real home-grown English-bred soccer culture. Peter had the Russians going the wrong way, he sold them dummies which they had no alternative but to buy, and in one inspired moment gave Peter Brabrook a perfect pass from the right-wing. From about three yards, and with only our old friend Yashin to beat, Brabrook missed his chance. He explained to me afterwards that he was running in so fast that when the

ball came over like a rocket, he had no time to collect it or control it. It hit him and the Russians had a lucky escape, which just goes to show how the spectator, from a distance, can be deceived.

They were even more fortunate in the second half when Peter Brabrook twice bored in towards goal and beat Yashin, only to see his shots strike the upright and come out again.

Russia had completely gone to pieces. They looked a third-rate team—just as they had in Moscow in May—and it seemed only a formality for our boys to open the scoring. A goal *was* scored—but at the wrong end of the field! In an unexpected raid, the Russian left-winger Ilyin moved into the middle, accepted a pass, and beat Colin McDonald with a shot which went in off the post.

So England were eliminated from the 1958 World Cup, after a game in which both sides were, frankly, disappointing. The storm of abuse was unleashed, especially from the TV critics at home who pilloried everyone, from the chairman of selectors down to the twentieth man on the team list.

There were guilty men, of course, but I must fall out with those critics who blamed Peter Brabrook for missing those two so-called 'open' goals, in the play-off match, when the ball hit the post on each occasion. To beat a big man like Yashin twice from an awkward angle—and beat him all ends up with the ball going across him—is good shooting for my money. Young Peter was desperately disappointed in the dressing room when he told me, 'It's tough enough to hit the post once, but when you do it twice, that's just too cruel.'

It is not my job to act as judge or jury at the inquest on England, but I feel, in view of the tremendous interest aroused by the non-selection of Manchester United's Bobby Charlton, I should try and correct the many wrong impressions concerning young Bobby in Gothenburg.

What is the *real* Bobby Charlton story? I must have been asked that question a hundred times since I came back from Sweden, and I know others present at the World Cup who have been tackled similarly about it.

Although I am sure nobody in Manchester will believe me, there is no 'real' Bobby Charlton story, no hidden mystery about his rejection by the England selectors, no backroom squabbles, clashes, or misbehaviour calling for disciplinary treatment. On the contrary, Bobby Charlton has always appeared to me to be one of the quietest lads with whom one could travel on soccer

business. To imagine him as anything akin to a trouble maker, or likely to fall out with those in control is quite ludicrous when you know this boy Charlton.

It may rather spoil the tales that have been spread by those 'in the know', but I am quite certain that the only reason for Bobby Charlton's missing the World Cup lay in the decision that he was considered too inexperienced for the series. It is not my job to comment on whether that was a good or a bad decision: I merely wish to shed a little truth on a situation which, in Lancashire at any rate, has been, first, invented, and second, hopelessly exaggerated.

Bobby Charlton lost his place in the England team after we had been beaten 5—0 in Belgrade. He was unfortunate to be one of those inevitably chosen to 'carry the can', and having played with him in that game, I am prepared to testify that Bobby tried every bit as hard as every other member of a badly beaten team.

I mention that point only because a story seems to have been bandied around to the effect that Bobby Charlton was not working quite as hard as he might have been during the Yugoslavian soccer deluge.

My assessment of Charlton as a player—and I am sure Bobby will not mind an older, more experienced, international colleague discussing his ability—is that he shows *great* potentialities. I like him a lot, and given normal progress, I have no doubts about his talent proving big enough for a regular berth in the international team.

At the same time, I cannot understand how the non-selection of a promising youngster—even one with such a load of potential brilliance on his side—could cause such a hysterical outburst among followers of football. Perhaps all these people, disappointed at England's poor showing in Sweden, needed a peg on which to hang their complaints. Charlton provided them with that peg. Would my friends in Manchester have asked for the 'real' Bobby Charlton story if England had won a few games in the World Cup? I doubt it.

Despite his natural disappointment at not being selected, the journey to Sweden will have done Bobby Charlton a lot of good, because that sort of experience must prove valuable in the future career of any boy just starting on a life in big-time soccer. Like Eddie Hopkinson, Peter Brabrook, Eddie Clamp and the other

young players, Bobby has seen some of the world's greatest footballers in action. I am sure he will, one day, benefit from what, on the surface, may seem to have been a frustrating trip.

Before dismissing the World Cup from the pages of my book, I feel some comment is called for on the very disappointing attendances at so many games in this wonderful tournament. When the greatest footballers in the world are on show, it seems incredible that local interest can produce gates no bigger than 5,000, 6,000, or as happened once, 2,800.

Sweden is a lovely country—but it is not a football country. The people were wonderfully hospitable—but they are not football-minded people. I feel the 1958 World Cup would have been better appreciated in a soccer-minded country.

I realize that the honour of putting on the greatest soccer show on earth must be passed around, but surely there should be some sort of preferential treatment given to those nations who have made it abundantly clear that their spectators really want to see soccer played? In 1950, the choice of Brazil was a good one. Here is a country whose very soul seems dedicated to the task of kicking a leather ball around, a country possessing the facilities and the support for big-time football. Spain is another, and Italy, and Argentina, and England.

Yet the organizing committee, in its wisdom, allocated the 1954 Championships to Switzerland, where the locals appear to be considerably more interested in climbing up and down their mountains, explaining why their clocks and watches are so much better than any others in the world, or generally catering for their annual influx of non-football tourists.

Four years later, Sweden is honoured, and I *cannot* imagine why. Attendances were bad, brightened only at times when the Swedes aroused themselves from their lethargy to cheer their own Swedish team, or turned up to watch the English 'masters'—because it is still a fact throughout the world that England always draw a good crowd.

I was told that the Swedes were disappointed at the non-qualification of such teams as Spain, Italy and Uruguay: they felt somewhat slighted at being denied the opportunity of watching legendary figures of the calibre of Di Stefano, Kubala, and Schiaffino. Instead they were given Mexico, Wales, Northern Ireland and Paraguay . . . and spectators just did not want to know about countries regarded as 'nonentities' by the Swedes.

It is unthinkable that 3,000 to 6,000 gates should see such a feast of football.

Television undoubtedly caused some of the drop in attendances, but I shall always refuse to believe that the genuine soccer supporter will elect to watch his game on a seventeen-inch screen when he has the alternative of the real thing available—even though it does cost him ten kroner at the turnstile.

Most grounds, too, in Sweden are not at all impressive. Apart from Gothenburg and Stockholm (each with a capacity of about 50,000) the rest of the Cup grounds could cater for no more than 30,000 spectators, indeed several of them would have been bursting at the seams with 20,000.

Norrkoping, one of the four 'big' grounds in this world tournament, would be regarded as 'ordinary' if it were used by a Second Division club in England, although it is probably on a par with some of our better Third Division club stadiums.

Tom Docherty, my Preston North End colleague who was with the Scottish team, told me that he saw several grounds which he likened to Junior grounds at home. Yet at such places the finest footballers in the world settled the destination of the World Cup for four years!

Now we must look forward to 1962 when, once more, the cream of the footballing nations are due to foregather for yet another World Cup competition. In 1962 the host nation will be Chile . . . yet Chile did not prove themselves strong enough even to qualify in 1954 or in 1958. Another odd choice as host nation, or so it seems, by the organizing committee.

Surely England, with Wembley, Highbury, Stamford Bridge, Villa Park, Hillsborough, Goodison Park and Maine Road could do better than Chile. Surely Germany, with Berlin, Hamburg, Hanover, and Cologne could also do better. And what of Spain, where the locals in Madrid, Barcelona, or Bilbao might permanently evict bull fighting if once given the opportunity of staging the World Soccer Championships.

The honour must go round the world, of course, and as England wanted nothing to do with the World Cup until eight years ago, I suppose we must wait in the queue for OUR turn. Fancy Chile . . . of all places!

CHAPTER 2

The big games before the World Cup . . . a 5—0 hiding in Belgrade . . . a Preston lad looks at Moscow.

HISTORY has a habit of repeating itself. Consult some old newspaper cuttings and see how true that saying is. As I write, I have before me a report of a Scotland *v.* England international match: England had scored four goals, and the World Cup was only a few weeks ahead. I quote from the *News Chronicle*: 'This result is one of the unhappiest things which has happened to English football all season. For the selectors now face the awkward task of trying to sort out where they should change a winning team.'

That could have been written in April 1958, but it wasn't. The cutting is dated 5th April 1954, and the writer was my old friend Frank Taylor, who could hardly have dreamed that, four years later, he would be in a Munich hospital and a survivor, by a miracle, of the Manchester United air crash.

Scotland apparently make a practice of giving England false ideas about her international strength before the World Cup. So it was in 1958, when one of the poorest Scottish teams I have ever played against, or watched, were well and truly beaten 4—0 by England. Even after such a decisive victory, I suppose weaknesses might have been spotted in our team; but what a position for a selector to find himself in! In retrospect, it seems England's World Cup chances might have been aided if the Scots had beaten us, for once, at Hampden.

Not that they ever looked capable of beating anyone on that sad afternoon in Hampden Park, even though the England team was very much an experimental one, with replacements needed for Roger Byrne, Tommy Taylor and Duncan Edwards—all killed at Munich.

New faces in the team were Bill Slater at left-half, returning to the international XI after a long absence, Jim Langley at left-back and Bobby Charlton at inside-right, both representing their country for the first time.

It used to be said that an Englishman was never a real inter-

national until he had played against Scotland, but that was in the days when the Scots were a much harder proposition! In this particular game, the England players were made to look much better than we really were. With the opposition so mediocre, it was never a true test, yet at the same time, there are fewer tougher baptisms than a first international match at Hampden Park, Glasgow.

Bobby Charlton had a very good game, and made it quite obvious to Scotland that he was a youngster of exceptional promise. Bobby has footballing ability, plus speed, and above all, two 'great' feet. The goal he scored at Hampden Park—a fifteen-yards first-time volley—was, to my mind, the hallmark of a real footballer. Young Bryan Douglas, too, had a dazzling afternoon, causing even some of Stanley Matthews' most loyal admirers to admit, grudgingly, that the Blackburn boy was 'almost as good as Stan'.

England, on the face of it, had a very capable team. We were soon brought down to earth when Portugal, rated one of the weakest of European international sides, came to Wembley and gave us the fright of our lives a few weeks later.

England were a very lucky team to win 2—1. The Portuguese showed delightful approach work in the first half, and had they been able to shoot, we should certainly have lost the match. Yet, having missed at least three 'open' goals, they permitted the English team to take command midway through the second half, so much so that in the last twenty minutes we were looking good value for a lot of goals. It was Bobby Charlton, with two typical scoring shots, who finished off these talented visitors from Portugal.

It is not my intention to fill my book with description of a series of international matches which are now soccer history: at the same time, I think the reader will agree that to get the 1958 World Cup into perspective, it is necessary to make some mention of the very important games that were played immediately prior to our departure for Sweden.

Scotland gave us a false impression of English strength. Portugal emphasized just how hollow our victory in Glasgow had been. Two games faced us before tackling the rest of the world . . . *v.* Yugoslavia in Belgrade and Russia in Moscow.

We arrived in Belgrade, and dropped right into a heatwave. Temperatures were in the nineties and, coming from a not very

promising English spring, that sort of heat really burns you up—physically and mentally. Our shirts were wet through before we were half-way from Belgrade airport to the hotel.

Manager Walter Winterbottom was burned up for another reason on the day before the match. He had just been reading the English newspapers, and like so many of us, was flabbergasted with front page headlines describing the 'shocking ordeal' of Munich crash survivor Bobby Charlton on the air trip to Belgrade. One paper described young Bobby's 'haunted eyes' and another went even further by suggesting that our Viscount plane had virtually 'limped' into Zurich airport on three engines and a prayer. Charlton's first flight since the crash was, of course, an event of some newsworthiness, but to describe our journey as anything but a smooth and pleasant one was, to my mind, gross distortion.

From London to Zurich we had a perfect flight and, blissfully unaware that he was about to make front-page news, Bobby was as cool as anyone on board. He is not the sort of lad to get perturbed, and I know he enjoyed the uneventful flight as much as the rest of the party.

After taking lunch at Zurich, there was a delay. Out of curiosity, I asked a BEA official what was holding us up. He told me the ground staff were not 100 per cent happy about one of the engines, and it had been decided to switch us from one Viscount to another. We left for Belgrade, and once again experienced a flight without incident.

So much for the 'ordeal': so much for the 'haunted eyes'. If my criticism of what I regard as irresponsible writing upsets the writers, I would ask them one question . . . would there have been *any* story at all if Charlton had not been in the England party?

On this particular tour, one could sense a certain amount of bad blood existing between the Press and the England officials, a state of affairs which I was told was not entirely the responsibility of the football writers. There was another clash when, on the day after Yugoslavia had hammered England 5—0, the entire party were taken on a routine sightseeing trip on the river Danube. Everyone appeared to enjoy the afternoon out, coming as it did on the heels of a most depressing ninety minutes of football at the Belgrade Army Stadium. And it was the first real break in training for the players since we had left our homes a week previously.

Some newspaper men who, incidentally, had also enjoyed to the full the hospitality on that boat, decided we should not have taken the boat trip. I consider they were hitting below the belt when they telephoned stories home inferring that the England team were 'cruising down the river' and wasting their time, making a holiday of the tour when they should have been training. I should point out that it is *not* advisable to train seven hours a day, seven days a week, and even the most overworked lackey in the land should not be denied a couple of hours for relaxation during the course of the week. In any case we had been invited on the river trip by the Yugoslav FA. It was not organized by England. Had we not turned up we would have been accused of rudeness to our hosts—and following our heavy defeat, it might have been said the players were sulking.

We certainly needed to relax in that heat. Although I dislike making excuses, I do know that the sweltering conditions in Belgrade, not only during the match, but at training sessions, and for every minute of the day (and night), had a lot to do with the hiding inflicted on England by Yugoslavia.

After the slaughter was over, several of the players, including myself, admitted that they were exhausted before the match had been in progress a quarter of an hour. It was a sticky heat, the kind that can drain all the energy from a man: only those who experience it regularly, as do the Yugoslavs, are able to withstand its withering effect.

However, as I said, I do not like making excuses, and, heat or no heat, this was without a doubt one of England's poorest international displays. It was on a par with the 7—1 defeat by Hungary in Budapest in 1954, the only difference being that Hungary were a much better team than Yugoslavia. At the same time, I believe Yugoslavia, as they played against us, could have beaten most nations in the world. They had brilliant players in centre-forward Milutinovic, inside-forwards Secularac and Veselinovic, right-half Krstic, and the fabulous goalkeeper Beara who, in point of fact, was this time called upon to stop only about two shots in ninety minutes!

With the match against Russia facing us, the axe had to fall, and one had to admit a lot of sympathy for Eddie Hopkinson, Jim Langley, Ronnie Clayton, and Bobby Charlton who were the 'chosen' men. Poor Bobby Charlton seems to have been under a cloud ever since, although he was certainly no worse or

better than the rest of the forwards (me included). It was his first experience against a skilful Continental side under their own conditions, and that is a very difficult assignment for an inexperienced youngster. In addition he was playing on the ground on which Manchester United played their last match before the Munich air crash.

Changes had to be made, though, and from the way the team was shaping up in practice matches, it seemed fairly obvious that Bobby Robson was going to displace the other Bobby at inside-right. Walter Winterbottom must have been wondering just how to solve his forward problems, because during one training session he came over to me and casually discussed possible inside forward combinations to face Russia.

This informal chat apparantly made big news for the English football writers, and at least one newspaper suggested that the international team had been selected—or partly selected—by Tom Finney and Billy Wright. I certainly picked no team, but I did pass an opinion. After the match in Belgrade Derek Kevan had been given his customary grilling from the press, and it was assumed that Middlesbrough's Brian Clough would be our centre-forward in Moscow. Unfortunately I had seen very little of Clough and was in no position to comment on his ability as an international centre-forward. At the same time, I told Walter Winterbottom that Peter Broadbent of the Wolves should be playing at inside-right or inside-left. I said to Walter, 'Peter will have to be brought in. He is a ball-playing type and that's what we're going to need.'

As a player I might have been in an embarrassing position. Perhaps my opinion could have put Johnny Haynes or Bobby Charlton out of the England team, but I did not expect the opinions of outside-left Finney, T., would decide the line-up of the England international XI.

When the forward line was eventually announced it read: Douglas, Robson, Kevan, Haynes and Finney, a line which was subsequently to be chosen as England's best in the World Cup.

After being humiliated in Belgrade, the English party in Moscow was not exactly blessed with confidence for the forthcoming battle against Russia. At the start of this tour, we had all regarded the Moscow match as the harder of the two. Now, having lost the 'easy' one 5—0, we were very morbid about what the Russian team would do to us. We had never seen them, or played

against them, as an international team, but on results over the past few years, it was reasonable to assume that Russia were possibly the best team in Europe.

My only experience of Soviet soccer was as a spectator at club matches when Spartak and Dynamo visited England, and despite the big build-up given to both clubs, I had not been over-impressed with the quality of their football.

Our pre-match briefing was based on the necessity to fight hard and work hard, and to do it from first whistle to last. There had been suggestions that certain players had not worked as hard as they should have done in Belgrade, although I could not agree with that diagnosis of our Yugoslavian ailments. The next Englishman I see shirking in an international match will be the first!

England undoubtedly worked in Moscow's Lenin Stadium. For most of the match we ran the Reds off their feet, and only a very doubtful equalizing goal gave Russia a lucky draw 1—1.

Frankly I was very disappointed with this much-lauded Soviet team. So were the Muscovite spectators, who cruelly whistled their team off the field, both at half-time and full-time. Derision from a home crowd is hard to take, and I felt really sorry for those Russian players who had been so outplayed by a team which, only a week previously, had lost so heavily.

Football apart, it was a wonderful experience visiting Moscow. Russia is a country which seldom has contact with other nations, and because of that, it remains something of a mystery land even to seasoned travellers. Trippers visit France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Scandinavia—even Lapland and Algiers. But few found their way into the USSR until recently, although a party of soccer-supporters turned up for the England game in Moscow.

With practically no interchange of tourists, the language barrier is most noticeable in Russia. It is said that if you speak English you can be understood all over the world, but I would exclude Russia from that generalization. That is why most British and American visitors find it essential to have the services of an interpreter throughout their stay in Russia. The England soccer party had two and very nice chaps they were, too.

They talked sensibly about our way of life and theirs, their English was perfect, and one had to agree that, up to a point, the 'experiment' of communism in Russia had paid dividends. Yet all the time these interpreters would insist on boasting about the greatness of the Soviet Union.

One of them told me, 'In the old days, the world laughed at Russia, and with good cause, for such a large percentage of the population was illiterate, but times have changed. Now the standard of education here is better than anywhere else in the world. And that is why we lead the world as scientists and engineers.' He was obviously talking from the book, but he certainly believed what he was telling me.

In Moscow there were no restrictions on our movements, apart from those imposed by manager Walter Winterbottom. We could wander around in groups or on our own, not so much to look in shop windows as to look for the shops! They are few and far between. There is the massive 'GUM' store, with its hundreds of small shops assembled in galleries under one roof, but all are state-owned. The private shopkeeper apparently does not exist in Russia.

I thought the ordinary people in Moscow were quite friendly, but never completely relaxed in our company: of course, language difficulties did not help that.

The Russian is, on the whole, a serious individual. Perhaps he enjoys life, in his own drab, dedicated, way, but I did think the striving for learning was taken too far when I saw a hotel lift girl working on algebraic problems as she went about her duties. Had I been able to question her about her choice of reading material, she would have told me, no doubt, that Algebra was more useful than *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. And I would not have been able to dispute that, I suppose, would I?

Tipping is taboo in Russia; in fact, in Moscow, you will find the only taxi-drivers in the world who refuse to accept even a quarter of a rouble above the exact fare. A few of them, having driven the occasional Western tourist, have mellowed a little in their outlook, but it is only after much genuine protestation that they will accept a paltry gratuity.

It is all in the state of the state-controlled mind. This was explained to me by the interpreter, as the England team were on their way to the airport at the conclusion of our visit. Most of the players had odd roubles left in their pockets, and knowing they would have no further use for the currency, decided to hand it all over as a gesture of appreciation to the interpreters. They would not accept the present. When we pointed out that, if they did not take the money, we should throw it away, one of them said, 'Do so, by all means.'

Then he explained: 'In Russia every man gets a fair wage. It is sufficient for him. It buys him all he needs. No Russian will take money unless he has worked for it. I am paid to attend to you while you are in Moscow, and I do not want extra money for doing it.'

Maybe the Russians do make enough money for 'all they need', but I would say they have precious little of it to spend on clothes. They are not at all well dressed, as a nation. The men wear badly-cut suits made of inferior material: the women go in for flat-heeled shoes, thick stockings, drab, severe, costumes, and only one in a hundred wears make-up—and then it is only the merest touch of lipstick or powder.

I think 'drab' is the best word to sum up Russia. I missed the admittedly vulgar, yet always colourful, advertisements which are so much a part of the English city scene; I missed the bright blues, greens, and even pinks of the modern motor-car (all Russian cars seem to be either grey or black). I missed the neon lights of cafés and restaurants—the only neon in Moscow seems to be reserved for the monotonous array of red stars which adorn so many of the important buildings. In short, there is no colour in Moscow. I think the Muscovites are missing a lot.

They have their own amusements, of course. As befits a serious-minded nation, there is little frivolity in their entertainment. We were privileged to be invited to the famous Bolshoi Theatre for a performance of the opera, *Prince Igor*, and although I am no lover of opera, I enjoyed every minute of it. It was fascinating too, to see the Stanislavsky Ballet in their presentation of *Swan Lake*. Nobody was more impressed with the opera and the ballet than captain Billy Wright. People take to the arts at a very early age in Russia. At *Prince Igor*, I counted dozens of children in the ten to twelve age group, all of them enthralled and loving every moment spent in that marvellous theatre.

The Red Square, the fabulous University buildings, the Kremlin and its mausoleum—with its gruesome occupants Lenin and Stalin, being ogled by thousands every day—we saw all of this. Moscow is indeed an interesting city.

In our own small way, I believe we did something to help the East understand the West a little better, but there was one slightly embarrassing moment when it looked as if an international incident—and not a football one—was on the way.

Our interpreter was on his usual hobby-horse, telling a few of

the lads of the tremendous good Russia was doing in the world today, when in typical down-to-earth Lancashire fashion, my room mate Tommy Banks interrupted with, 'Ay, that's all very well, but what about Hungary!'

Accepting the question as if it were no more out of place than an enquiry about the weather, the interpreter went to great lengths to explain to us exactly why the Russians had gone into Budapest during the revolution, and crazy as it may seem, he actually seemed to be making out a good case for his country.

That decided me. I had been in the Soviet Union long enough. When that sort of propaganda starts to make sense, it's time to think about leaving. We were not sorry to leave Russia, but I know we are all glad we went.

11. (*Top*) The author shared a room with fellow-Lancastrian Tommy Banks, Bolton Wanderers' left-back, in Gothenburg during the 1958 World Cup Competition. A photographer surprised the two Tommy's wearing their World Cup souvenir caps in bed one morning

12. (*Below*) A Lancashire group sit down for a chat in a Glasgow hotel before England play Scotland in April 1958. Left to right Ronnie Clayton (Blackburn Rovers), Tom Finney, Eddie Hopkinson (Bolton Wanderers) and Bryan Douglas (Blackburn Rovers). Odd man out (standing) is team trainer Harold Shepherdson of Middlesbrough

13. (*Top*) Preston North End centre-forward Charlie Wayman scores a 1954 Wembley Cup Final goal . . . a goal which appeared to many of the 100,000 spectators to be offside

14. (*Bottom*) An opportunist header from the author beats Leicester City goalkeeper, John Anderson, to make the score 3—1 in Preston's favour. This goal took North End into the semi-final of the 1954 FA Cup Competition . . . after three hard matches against Leicester

CHAPTER 3

Soccer mistakes at international level . . . changes needed in laws of the game . . . spectators deserve better treatment . . . problems of football pools and television.

ENGLAND will never win the World Cup while the present international set-up exists. The scales are loaded too heavily against us; there are so many things we do which are wrong in terms of international competition, so many things we do not do which are right. At the moment we just cannot really compete seriously for the Cup with a nation like Brazil: yet I am convinced that in this island of ours we possess the potential to beat the world, if only we went the right way about it.

In England, rightly or wrongly, club affairs, the Football League and the FA Cup are the first concern. Of secondary importance is the English international team. In Brazil, Hungary, Spain and most other football-minded countries, the order of preference is reversed. That, certainly, is the main stumbling-block whenever we try to match our skill against the world in international competition.

On the sporting field, national pride is of little importance to the average Englishman. If Scotland should beat England at Wembley, I am quite sure no tears will be shed by supporters of the home country. After all, they argue, it is only a game. Sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. Let England beat Spain in Madrid, though, and the Spaniard will regard the result as something akin to a national disaster. Just as a Tottenham Hotspur supporter would if Arsenal won at White Hart Lane. Yes, we take our soccer very seriously at club level, while the Continentals seem quite indifferent to such things as League Championships. That is the big difference.

I think it was a well-known Football League official who once said, 'It is not terribly serious if Hungary, Yugoslavia, or even Timbuktoo beat England in international matches, so long as League entertainment is being provided for fans in England every Saturday.' Such a statement can be easily ridiculed, but there is a certain amount of sense in it. Before the coming of television, the

average follower of football in this country knew little about the footballers of Sweden, Germany, France or Argentina. He was not really interested, yet he could become a fanatic when watching Burnley, Bolton, Newcastle United, and Aston Villa.

Television, of course, has broadened his outlook, so much so that one commonly hears the most unlikely people discussing the merits of Garincha, Skoglund, Di Stefano, and Schiaffino. Without becoming dedicated to it, the English soccer enthusiast now takes a much keener interest in the international game. He takes it more seriously and I think the rulers of the game should do the same.

In some countries, the League programme is often completely ignored when the wishes of individual clubs are likely to prejudice the preparation of the national team. I should not like to see us going to these lengths, but I feel there is ample room for increased assistance and co-operation from clubs whenever the England team has a job of work to do. I know some clubs who would rather their players were never capped, lest they should be deprived of the services of star players for even one Saturday in a season.

In case that may be regarded as exaggeration, it should be mentioned that some clubs, in the past, actually did insist on players turning out for League games instead of representing, say, Ireland in internationals. And had the release of players for England not been compulsory, they would obviously have treated their English players in the same way.

Again, clubs have asked the FA not to release the names of players picked for big matches until the last possible moment—the suggestion being that such players would refuse to give of their best in the League match preceding the international. This, in my opinion, is a slander on the good name of every footballer. In my own experience, I have actually had to drop out of the England team *through injuries collected in a League game a few days before the international.*

Managers and directors may talk a lot about the honour of having their players capped, but take it from me, they dislike losing anyone . . . even for one Saturday. That seemingly parochial outlook is quite understandable as far as managers are concerned. A football club manager lives, and dies, by the results of his team: he gets no bouquets for an England victory.

Supposing England, like Brazil, felt dedicated to soccer—

international soccer. How would we have approached the business of winning the 1958 World Cup?

England were probably the last country to arrive in Sweden for the competition, in fact we had only two clear days between arrival and our first game. Brazil had spent weeks travelling together all over Europe winning matches; living, working, and playing as a team. If England had left home as early as the Brazilians, the players (me included) would have been bored stiff and full of complaints about being away from their families. **But should our wishes be considered?** Not when you're dedicated to football.

If England had been living a more spartan life in a quiet hide-out well away from the city of Gothenburg, the players probably would have been at a loose end and unhappy. **But does their personal happiness matter?** Not when you're dedicated to football.

If some English players had been found deficient in the ball skills, such as shooting, trapping, and heading, those players may not have enjoyed practising that skill for hour after monotonous hour, like the Brazilians. **But is their enjoyment important?** Not when you're dedicated to football.

The dedication does not apply in England. Until it does, we shall continue to chase South American shadows.

There is, too, an amateur approach to the vitally important business of team selection. Surely the present selection committee of at least nine individuals is far too big. It should be drastically streamlined.

An ideal selection committee would be composed of no more than three men, and while acknowledging and appreciating all the work put in by the present committee, I believe the English selectors should all be experienced former players. In cricket, the Test teams are chosen by men like G. O. Allen, Cyril Washbrook, Wilfred Wooller, Leslie Ames and Tom Dollery. The officials of the MCC, like the FA officials, *could* attend to team selection themselves—but they obviously realize that active cricketers and ex-cricketers have the background to do it that little bit better.

Perhaps, for once, cricket gives a lead to football in a very important business! From information I have picked up on my travels, I would say that England, Ireland (North and South), Wales, and Scotland are the only countries in which the international team is chosen by men lacking an obvious footballing background. Surely that cannot be a good thing?

If experts like Stan Cullis, Cliff Britton and Joe Mercer were English selectors, I am sure the talents of some of our truly great footballers would have been recognized more often. There must be something wrong when an artist like Jimmy Hagan can only collect one cap, when Ernie Taylor gets only one, and when players of the calibre of Harry Johnston and Len Shackleton could never get a regular place in their country's team.

It might not be a bad idea to make the selection committee even smaller than I have suggested, indeed, to cut it down to the minimum possible, i.e. allow one man complete control. A dictatorship? Call it that if you wish, but it has produced results in other countries. Remember how Vittorio Pozzo produced Italian teams which won successive World Cups in 1934 and 1938 —a remarkable achievement, and Pozzo was not encumbered by selectors, advisers, or helpers. He was the boss, and was prepared to be fêted or fired on the results he achieved. Pozzo, in fact, *was* sacked after England beat Italy 4—0 in Turin, and significantly the Italians have had a lean time ever since.

Another wonderful international team of the early 1930's was Hugo Meisl's Austria. Meisl, like Pozzo, was a dictator, but he built up a delightful international side which, to this day, is remembered for giving England a fright at Stamford Bridge in 1932. Move the calendar on another twenty years, and consider the Hungary of Boszik, Puskas, and Kocsis, brilliantly controlled by one Gustav Sebes, a former international player himself. Hungary were successful, fabulously successful, in fact I cannot hope ever to see a greater team.

Appoint the right man. Give him full control. If his team fails, then let him take the consequences. If his team succeeds, give him the credit. My own club, Preston North End, provide the perfect example of the wisdom of such a system. For a time, before Cliff Britton was appointed manager, North End had as many as nine team selectors. We were at the bottom of the League, and being tipped for relegation to the Second Division.

The Board of Directors decided Cliff Britton was the right man. They were happy, and no doubt relieved, to let him take full responsibility for the playing affairs of the club. In two seasons, North End finished third and second in the League . . . **with virtually the same players who had been with us at the foot of the table.**

I realize selectors are in a difficult position. Everyone likes to

take pot-shots at them, and I do not wish to add to the general condemnation of their efforts. At the same time they have, in the past, made some extraordinary decisions which so *obviously* invited criticism. England beat Denmark 5—1 in Copenhagen. Seven changes were made for the next international. England beat World Champions Germany 3—1 at Wembley. Again seven changes were made when England next took the field. Would a Pozzo, a Meisl, or a Sebes, have torn winning teams to pieces so ruthlessly? I doubt it.

While I am in a reforming mood, I should like to line myself up on the side of Manchester United manager, Matt Busby, who made some very sensible suggestions in his book, about certain changes needed in the laws of Association Football. As I write, I notice that the FA, despite a change in the International Board rules, have again decided against the use of substitutes in competitive matches under their control. This, to my mind, is a backward step, even though I would not recommend a move to the other extreme and permit the indiscriminate employment of substitute players.

For the benefit of spectators—and, after all, they are the people whose wishes should be considered above all—every game of soccer should be played with eleven men on each side for ninety minutes. Injuries occur frequently, and much as I admire the 'gallant ten men' theme, I would say that in ninety per cent of the matches in which one team loses a player through injury, the team with eleven fit men is the winner. This not only robs spectators of the evenly-fought tussle for which they have paid money, it can also rob great clubs of the highest honours in the game. For instance, without taking sides, it is very doubtful whether struggling Aston Villa, albeit 'inspired' on that particular afternoon, would have beaten a wonderful Manchester United side in the FA Cup Final at Wembley in 1957 had United not lost the services of their goalkeeper Ray Wood in the opening minutes. Argue, if you like, that injuries even themselves out, club by club, during the season; but when 100,000 people pay nearly £50,000 to see the match of the season, they are entitled to see the better team win. Perhaps Manchester United would have lost anyway, *but United were never given the opportunity of showing whether they could win.*

I believe the method of substitution used for friendly international matches is as good as any, with a substitute being

permitted for an injured goalkeeper at any time during the course of the match, and another being allowed for other players up to the forty-fourth minute.

Having said that, I realize the usual objections will be raised by all the football enthusiasts who have seen foreign countries, and clubs, abusing the substitute rule instead of using it sensibly. If a man goes off injured, who is to decide whether or not he is genuinely injured? Referees are not medical men, and a player with a limp could be either off form, tired, or quite definitely injured.

One suggestion which has been put forward is a time lag between the departure from the field of the injured player and the arrival of his substitute. Probably no team would deliberately play with ten men for, say, ten or fifteen minutes, unless it had been absolutely necessary for the eleventh man to go off.

Sir Leslie Bowker, the distinguished soccer statesman, has been crusading for this reform for years, but his efforts appear to have been wasted. At the mere mention of the word 'substitutes', most of the rulers of football hold their hands up in horror and say, 'It must never come. Look at the way the foreigners abuse it.'

I believe substitutes could be a boon to soccer, provided that wise legislation against abuse were introduced. There are other objections, even though I would call them minor problems.

More players would be needed. A club fielding only two teams weekly would need four extra players, two goalkeepers and two 'utility' men, and in these days of alleged high wages for professionals, the expense would worry all but the most affluent of clubs. Yet, today, even Third and Fourth Division teams regularly take twelve men to all their matches, and if substitutes were permitted they would need only one more, a goalkeeper.

In addition, I feel it is bad, in principle, to have too many spare players on hand on match days. I know it is excellent experience for young footballers to travel away with the first team, even though not actually playing, but these youngsters should be playing, not watching, whenever possible.

For all that, the risk of players becoming rusty through inactivity, the slight increase in the weekly wage bill, the possibility (if it exists) of abuse, are surely of small account when the credit side of the ledger promises matches being fought fairly and squarely between teams with the same number of players on the field. Yes, let us have substitutes.

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Another controversial matter is the charging of goalkeepers. A fair shoulder charge, although permitted in British soccer, is frowned upon abroad, and invariably causes referees to halt play and award a free kick against the player making the charge. Are we right, or are the foreigners?

Physical contact is part and parcel of football, and the game would tend to become very dull if we eliminated strong challenge for possession of the ball, but I have often wondered if anything is ever gained when a forward attacks a goalkeeper—whether fairly or unfairly.

Perhaps Bolton Wanderers might argue that considerable gain is there for the taking, as was demonstrated in the 1958 Cup Final when Wanderers scored a vital goal as a direct result of Harry Gregg being charged by my old friend Nat Lofthouse.

Yet, if the camera does not lie, photographs of the incident reproduced later show Nat's feet off the ground as he made his charge which, according to the laws of the game, means he had an unfair advantage and did, in fact, commit a foul. Would Bolton have scored if both Gregg and Lofthouse had met shoulder to shoulder with their feet on the ground? One cannot be dogmatic about this, but it is a fact that, in most games when this occurs, it is the forward who bounces back with nothing gained other than possible bruising and loss of dignity.

It is possible that, were I built on the lines of a Jock Dodds or a Derek Kevan, or played my football like Trevor Ford, I would be 100 per cent in favour of charging goalkeepers, but lacking their physical advantages, and playing a different type of centre-forward football, I prefer to leave goalkeepers to themselves . . . once they have gained possession of the ball!

This often allows the goalkeeper to use the ball advantageously, but is that a bad thing? Hasty clearances, whether inspired by panic or lack of ability, have never, in my opinion, been an adornment of the soccer scene. Let the goalie use the ball: let him start an attack. No player, and I include goalkeepers, should confine his talents to defence alone.

With goalkeepers unhampered, they might be tempted to waste time, but that could be stopped very simply if referees awarded free kicks against them for ungentlemanly conduct.

We must rid ourselves of the complex that what was good enough for our grandfathers *must* be good enough today. No sport can afford to stand still and rest on tradition. Ideas, rules,

and changes—sometimes big changes—should keep pace with circumstances as they alter year by year. A system may work admirably for fifty years, but that is no reason for leaving it unchanged if, in the fifty-first year, a more efficient system comes along.

On the whole, I think the present rules and laws governing soccer are not far from perfect. At the same time, I would always be ready to listen to suggestions which make good common sense, although it does appear as if the legislators in the FA and Football League are not very keen to make changes.

Suppose, for example, it was proposed to scrap the present penalty area and substitute (that word again) in its place a semi-circle of constant distance from the centre of the goal line. It is not supposition, though, because I believe such a recommendation did once come before the International Board, and presumably it was thrown out of court.

Any player within the semi-circle would be in a dangerous position, if not in a scoring position. Therefore if he were fouled the drastic decision of a penalty kick would, in most cases, be justified. With the present rectangular penalty area, offences may be committed in the two corners farthest from the goal, and although the player in possession may not have the remotest chance of scoring, he is (in theory) awarded a goal, because penalty kicks should always be converted.

Changes in the field markings would have to be discussed thoroughly before a decision was reached, of course, and it could be that a semi-circular penalty area would also possess disadvantages. I mention the point only to stress that all ideas which, in the opinion of their sponsors, are for the betterment of the game ought to be seriously investigated. After all, the pioneers of floodlight football in Britain—the Arsenal manager, Herbert Chapman, was one of them more than twenty years ago—were ridiculed. Today, who would dare to disagree that the men who deserved ridicule were those who would not listen to the likes of Chapman?

I quote an important legislator of British football: 'Lighting makes soccer an unreal spectacle, and I do not wish to see it introduced into the League competition.' **That statement was made, not twenty years ago, but in the 'enlightened' 1950's.**

It is heartening to record an almost imperceptible, but nevertheless definite, modernization in the affairs of the ruling bodies.

Wage reforms have taken us some way along the road towards the professional's new deal; rules of the Football League have been streamlined in an effort to give them a mid-twentieth-century appearance; it is now suggested, after so many wasted years, that the colossal sums of money made by Pools promoters out of soccer should be investigated and, if possible, a share of such monies should be returned to the game in one way or another.

The Pools companies should not be blamed for any reluctance to assist the game which supplies them with their bread and butter—and a fair share of the jam: indeed their offers, sometimes exceedingly large ones, have in the past been virtually thrown back in their faces. Gambling has always been regarded as taboo in football, even though such strict adherence to principles meant the rejection of Pools offers one of which was of not less than £100,000 a year—made just after the war.

It is a strange anomaly that the same gentlemen who, for years, would have nothing to do with Pools money, were at the same time tolerating, even encouraging, lotteries in their own supporters' clubs to raise much-needed revenue. Let us hope they have seen the light, just as did the anti-floodlight brigade, and that legal proceedings instituted by the League against a Pools company will straighten out this unsatisfactory business.

Just imagine the good that could come from the acceptance of an annual subscription from Pools companies. More cash would be available for coaching, playing fields could be purchased and maintained, boys' clubs and youth teams could be assisted and, surely the greatest boon of all, money could be distributed—as gifts or on loan—to individual clubs to be used on long-overdue ground improvements.

The more I travel the world, the more I realize that Britain is being left behind by everyone in the important business of providing amenities for the public to watch soccer.

Sheffield Wednesday manager Eric Taylor summed it up well when, after seeing the Uleevi Stadium in Gothenburg on which World Cup games were staged, he commented, 'I wish I could move this stadium to Sheffield—just to show the people at home what they're missing.' That remark is all the more significant if you consider that most English clubs envy Sheffield Wednesday their Hillsborough ground, and regard it as one of the finest we possess.

The Gothenburg ground is not colossal by our standards—the

capacity being about 55,000—but, for comfort, it knocks spots off Wembley, Goodison Park, Villa Park, and, as Eric Taylor admitted honestly, Hillsborough.

Through my injury, I was forced to occupy a stand seat at Gothenburg instead of chasing Brazilians on the field. The first thing that would have amazed an English football spectator was the soft cushion hanging on the back of each seat. Then again, the refreshment facilities were perfect, while sanitary arrangements would put *every* English ground to shame. Above all, the architecture leaves one breathless with its futuristic, yet simple, beauty. No iron girders or pillars to obstruct the view, no ugly shanty-town shacks dropped in odd corners of the stadium, no rotting wooden enclosures to separate one ticket holder from another.

It is true, of course, that the Gothenburg stadium is brand-new, and therefore is able to incorporate all the advantages of up-to-date building, yet how many clubs at home—given a similar opportunity to build—would erect such a show ground?

Some English clubs have, in fact, moved into new homes since the war—Port Vale, Hull City, and Southend United, for instance, *yet in every case, the traditional lines that were popular forty years ago have been followed during the building process.* I admit most foreign stadiums can be open, while in Britain where we have to anticipate an abominable climate, a roof is, or should be, on every stand. But is it beyond the limit of our designers' talents to incorporate covered accommodation in a superb modern setting?

In almost every Continental capital—and in the South American countries—new football grounds are constantly being erected, and they really look new. We have nothing to compare with Gothenburg, or Lisbon, or Madrid, or Budapest, or Moscow, or Rio de Janeiro. In the Lenin Stadium, in Moscow, the dressing rooms are almost as luxurious as hotel lounges, with carpets on the floor, armchairs, and curtains. Those Russians have even installed a radiogram, and I can tell you it's a strange, and pleasant, experience to listen to soft music while you're stripping for a game!

Considering that we are the people who gave this wonderful game of Association Football to the world, it is a depressing experience to discover just how far we have slipped behind in so many ways. Ponder this point—the finest stadium in England was built more than thirty-five years ago. **And a lot can happen in thirty-five years.**

One of the big talking points in football these days is whether or not the clubs should play ball with television. At the moment, TV is outlawed completely by the Football League, although the FA does not adopt quite such an uncompromising attitude. The FA Cup Final, and many international games and other representative fixtures are frequently shown on TV, while occasionally friendly matches and European Cup games also find their way on to the screens of millions of viewers.

This is a very tricky situation to sort out. Should we regard television as a monster, keeping it quite apart from football, lest it should do to the game what it has undoubtedly done to the live Music Hall? Or should we decide that television is here to stay, that soccer cannot succeed where King Canute once failed, and play along with it in the hope of gaining some publicity benefit—as sports like show jumping, lawn tennis, and athletics have done?

A compromise must be found. To open the door completely, and permit the live television of League matches would certainly be akin to the kiss of death. That can only be done if the fees paid by the TV companies are large enough to compensate for the certain fall in gate receipts through the turnstiles . . . and television does not possess that kind of money. Only in the United States would such a scheme be practicable, where a title fight can be staged in a half-empty Madison Square Garden and, thanks to television, the fight can yield thousands of dollars in profit.

I believe we are working on the right lines now. It is a great thing having sport, especially soccer, on television if it can be enjoyed without doing the game any harm financially. Memorable European Cup matches, and, of course, the whole World Cup series, have been seen by millions of people from Penzance to Perth and from Dover to Dumfries, bringing those people football entertainment which ninety-five per cent of them would have had no chance of getting a few years ago.

There is a *chance*, perhaps, that if a fan sees a game on a Wednesday night on television, he might decide not to bother with another game on the following Saturday afternoon, particularly if it happens to be raining! But the real football follower will never forsake the pleasure (or misery) of actually seeing his local club, simply because he watched a substitute for the real thing a few days previously on a small screen.

Already, with soccer television strictly controlled, some clubs

blame TV for falling attendances: they should look elsewhere for the scapegoat. It has been proved by clubs like Wolves and Manchester United that nothing will prevent supporters turning up at football matches, providing they are entertained by the teams they watch.

There have been drastic drops at the gate, but only because we tend to compare 1958–9 with the boom years between 1946 and 1952. In those days a club like Middlesbrough could expect gates of between 40,000 and 45,000 for ordinary League games, and could make a profit of as much as £40,000 in a season.

Preston North End, my own club, had an average gate of 35,000 during the boom. Compare that with last season when, having won nineteen out of twenty-one home League matches and finished runners-up in the First Division, the average was about 25,000. I should say the latter figure is the more realistic one, and is similar to pre-war days, while the other is a false one caused by the ravenous appetite of a post-war sport-starved public.

Look at other sports. During the 'good times', big boxing matches were invariably a sell-out, ice-hockey teams were playing to packed houses all over the country, spectators queued all night outside cricket grounds to see Test matches—and not only those against Don Bradman's Australians—crowds of 30,000 regularly attended Speedway meetings, and even the shareholders of greyhound racing tracks were able to join in a boom when record dividends were announced season after season.

Those days are behind us. It is pointless expecting them to return. Just as pointless as it is to blame television for their departure.

CHAPTER 4

An aeroplane crashes at Munich . . . my contribution towards Manchester United's recovery.

EVEN at the risk of awakening unhappy memories, I feel some mention must be made in my story of the terrible disaster which hit the game of soccer on 9th February 1958. On that miserable day, Manchester United Football Club became headline news in every football-playing country in the world . . . because an aeroplane crashed at Munich Airport. On board the plane were seventeen United players, four club officials, and nine football writers, in addition to several other passengers. Eight of the players lost their lives, only one of the nine journalists (Frank Taylor of the *News Chronicle*) survived, and the tragic death roll was completed by trainer Tom Curry, secretary Walter Crickmer, coach Bert Whalley, travel agent Bela Miklos, United supporter Willie Satinoff and two of the crew, co-pilot Rayment and steward Cable. One tends to become a fatalist when reading of air disasters, but Munich was different. So many among the twenty-three who perished were close, personal, friends of mine and to this day, I can hardly bring myself to believe that I shall never see them again.

I well remember the day the news was first made known. I was doing a job at a foundry at Radcliffe when one of my workers—Bill Dowbiggin is his name—came up and said, 'Have you heard the news?' 'What news?' I asked. 'Manchester United's plane has crashed on the way back from Belgrade,' he told me.

How often, upon hearing grave news, we tend to disbelieve it. 'Where did you get that silly tale?' I asked Bill, but he confirmed, 'It's true. It's all over the foundry.'

All over the foundry. It was, indeed. Within minutes it was all over Britain. Within hours it was all over the world. But in Manchester it was felt the most. The 'Busby Babes', in such a short space of time, had become something of a legend in this great Lancashire city. They were destined to become the greatest football side the world has seen: of that Manchester was convinced. They were going to dominate British football for five,

maybe ten or twenty, years: of that Manchester was convinced. For who could stop them: these young masters of the soccer arts who had shown a clean pair of heels, while theoretically still learning the game, to every other First Division club in two successive seasons? It took a coating of ice and frozen snow, or maybe an engine that did not sound quite right, or a house unfortunately placed near the end of an airport runway, to stop them. And soccer, all over the world, is the poorer for their passing.

I went home that night. I could not fancy my evening meal. I had to concentrate on one thing only, the regular news bulletins being flashed on the television screen every few minutes. As the names were mentioned, I thought of them, not as names, but as people, good folk, friends of mine. There was sadness as a name might be mentioned among the deceased: there was a prayer of thanks as another might be listed among the survivors. That was a night I shall never forget, in fact even now many months after it is all over, I still find myself thinking about my friends who died at Munich airport on 9th February.

I think, first, of my three English international colleagues: Tommy Taylor, surely one of the greatest centre-forwards; Roger Byrne, often underrated, seldom given the credit he deserved for his great talents, yet how missed by club and country when he was no longer there; and the magnificent Duncan Edwards, who while still little more than a kid, had already become a legendary figure of English football.

I think, also, of the cheeky Eddie Colman, at right-half the perfect foil for powerful Duncan on the opposite flank. Who could doubt that 'swivel hips' Eddie Colman would have followed Edwards into the England team? And Mark Jones, quiet, pipe-smoking Mark from Rotherham, who had fought so many battles for his first team place at Old Trafford, and had won the hardest of them all, only a few weeks before the tragedy.

I think of young David Pegg and Billy Whelan, full internationals both of them, but never too big to make way for others in the United team when, as happens to all of us, their dazzling form deserted them temporarily. Geoff Bent is gone too, the player whom Matt Busby treasured as his 'spare' full-back, knowing so well that there was never any danger of a weakness in the side if either Billy Foulkes or Roger Byrne could not turn out.

Eight fine footballers who will play no more, yet eight whose achievements, in so short a time, will forever be remembered.

In addition to the eight who gave their lives, there are, at the time of writing, grave doubts as to whether Johnny Berry and Jackie Blanchflower will be able to resume their playing careers. Almost a whole team has been lost to soccer.

Among the officials, I knew of none better than Bert Whalley, conscientious Bert, whose favourite spare-time occupation was doing good for others, working until all hours of the night to help raise funds for his local church. I played football, as a youngster, against Bert Whalley and we were great pals.

Sporting journalism, too, suffered a severe loss. Henry Rose, a showman to his finger-tips, whose very presence on the football grounds of the north caused more comment and good-natured banter, in the stands, than anything that might be happening on the field of play. Archie Ledbrooke, who in 1954 was kind enough to write the story of my life in the old *Daily Dispatch*, was a newspaper man known so much better in his adopted north country than in his southern birthplace. Archie was accepted by northerners as 'one of us', and not all 'foreigners' can boast that distinction.

Don Davies, the little man from the *Manchester Guardian* who wrote for so many years under the nom-de-plume 'Old International', was equally well known as a radio commentator. I always enjoyed Donny on the radio, as I did in his writing, because I could rely on him for good, honest, reporting, shorn of the sensational trimmings, so prevalent in modern journalism.

For me personally, though, the greatest loss was Frank Swift. 'Big Sweeft,' as he was known in a dozen Continental countries, was a wonderful personality both on and off the field. Having shared his genial company on so many footballing occasions, I was stunned to hear that he, too, had gone. They don't come like Frank Swift very often.

Perhaps it was just as well that, despite the tears, the grief, and sadness, Manchester United had to carry on, somehow, and fulfil their obligations in the League and FA Cup. Their first match after Munich was the fifth round of the Cup, against Sheffield Wednesday, and from the day of the disaster until the game, United had a bare thirteen days in which to field eleven first-team men from the wreckage of this great club.

With manager Matt Busby critically ill in hospital, his assistant

Jimmy Murphy took on what must surely rank as the toughest task ever thrust upon a team manager. Slowly the team began to take shape. Names were pencilled in. Gregg and Foulkes had emerged from the plane wreckage miraculously unharmed, and Greaves, with a fair amount of first-team experience, was the obvious left-back choice. Goodwin and Cope, both reserves of near-first-XI standard, settled the right-half and centre-half positions. That was the defence almost complete. The forwards caused the biggest headache. Apart from Webster, also a Central League player, *there was nobody mature enough to claim a place.* Two members of the Youth team, Pearson and Dawson, were named at inside-left and centre-forward, and then Jimmy Murphy played his trump card by signing that wonderful little inside-right, Ernie Taylor, from Blackpool.

An attempt was made to sign Brian Pilkington from Burnley for the outside-left berth, but Burnley not only refused to part, but also let it be known that stricken United had no right to expect clubs to sell their best players. An unfortunate business, that Burnley outburst.

Outside-lefts are as scarce as interest-free loans from money lenders—I should know, having been a *temporary* makeshift left-winger for England for some ten years!—and the Murphy quest for one was hopeless. So Jimmy compromised with a right-footed inside-forward, Shay Brennan, from the Youth team.

Now one problem remained—at left-half. Wilf McGuinness, always knocking on the first-team door, would have been the ideal man for the job, but to add to United's frustration, McGuinness had cartilage trouble, necessitating an operation.

I think everyone in Lancashire wanted to see how the 'United Remnants' fared against Sheffield Wednesday. A friend of mine asked if I could possibly get a couple of tickets for him, so I promised to give Jimmy Murphy a ring.

When I told Jimmy what I was after, he said, 'Are you coming to the match, Tom?' I told him that, much as I would have liked to go, I had promised to give a sports talk in Preston that night, and did not see how I could let my audience down. Jimmy insisted, 'Try and come, as a great favour to me. I am hoping to sign a left-half before the match, and you may be able to help.' I said I would do my best, but could not be certain unless I fixed up one of my North End team mates to stand in for me at the sports talk. As it happened, Tommy Docherty was good enough

to oblige, and I went to keep my appointment at a Manchester hotel with Jimmy Murphy . . . just two and a half hours before kick-off time at Old Trafford.

Escorted into a private suite, away from at least two dozen reporters and photographers who were there for the big story, I met Jimmy, with Aston Villa wing-half Stan Crowther and Villa manager Eric Houghton. Jimmy called me on one side and explained, 'This boy Crowther is undecided about signing. He's never been away from home, and he knows nothing about us. Will you tell him what you think about Manchester United?'

Jimmy Murphy, like his boss Matt Busby, has an indefinable charm which can make such a request seem the most natural thing in the world. There was I, a Preston North End player, being asked to 'sell' another club to a hesitant player. I was delighted to help.

I told Stan Crowther, 'Lots of footballers would give their right arm to join Manchester United. If I wasn't so attached to North End, I'd love to play for United, myself. I'm certain they are going to rise again, because despite everything, they've already got the nucleus of a good side.' That was the trend of my 'persuasive' chat—trying, all the time, to tell Crowther this would be an excellent move for him. He gave me the impression that he was not looking forward to taking over from a soccer giant of Duncan Edwards' stature, but I hope my chat helped to sway him. There. was no provision then for giving footballers any percentage of their transfer fee, and when a lad moves house and home, I feel he should get some compensation, all the more so when his transfer brings the selling club a colossal profit.

So Jimmy Murphy worked his charm again, this time on another friend, David Jack, who has helped me with this book. He asked David, 'Would your newspaper, the *Empire News*, buy a series of articles written by Crowther?' That was agreed, too, and by this time the forms had been produced and—only one hour before the kick-off—Stan Crowther became a Manchester United player.

Like all fairy tales, this one had a happy ending. On that cold February night, United, playing as a team inspired, as indeed they were by the finest encouragement I have ever heard from any crowd of supporters, won the easiest of 3—0 victories to progress to the sixth round of the Cup.

It was a night to remember—an unforgettable experience. Like

so many who watched, I wondered if the Manchester United team which took the field could possibly recover from the loss of so many fine footballers . . . Byrne, Edwards, Colman, Whelan, and all the others. Our doubts were soon dispelled. No other club could have hoped to recover from such a disaster without taking, at the very least, four or five years to do so. United were back on the winning trail—a trail destined to lead them as far as Wembley —in a brief thirteen days.

That, surely, was the finest compliment the 'United Remnants' could pay to the wise team-building of their desperately ill boss, Matt Busby, in Munich. And, I am sure, every one of those footballers who perished in that Elizabethan airliner, would have been proud of the achievement of their makeshift successors.

CHAPTER 5

Football is full of personalities.

MOST professional footballers, contrary to the opinion of many grammar school Rugby-Union-inclined headmasters, are decent fellows. Nearly all my closest friends are connected with soccer, and I could not wish for better companions. Yet every few years one rises above all the others and establishes himself, for one reason or another, as something bigger than the rest. Call it flair, call it personality, call it what you will, when a real footballing character emerges from the thousands who play this game, his rise cannot be attributed simply to his proficiency as a player. In this chapter, I propose to discuss a few of those characters of soccer.

Who better to start with than Billy Wright, captain courageous of Wolverhampton Wanderers, and of England? Billy may not be the finest centre-half ever to play for his country, although for consistency, he must be challenging for the honour. Consistency. That, I feel, is the key to the magic in Billy Wright's make-up.

With no figures to guide me, I should say Billy has played more League, Cup, and representative games per season than any footballer in the long history of the game. How seldom does one read, 'Wright unfit to play'? A frustrating business for his understudies in the Wolves and England teams, but a source of much gratification to Stanley Cullis and Walter Winterbottom!

Wright may have been fortunate to have dodged major injury in his illustrious career, yet his type of football, involving as it does ninety minutes of perpetual motion, would never be recommended to those planning to avoid injury trouble.

Wright would be the first to agree that his switch from wing-half to centre-half—an experiment made to help England out of a World Cup difficulty in 1954—made a tremendous difference to his career. The move undoubtedly lengthened Billy's international days, and while he was always a first-class wing-half, he became a much better centre-half. Small for the position, his height has proved no handicap because, as compensation for a lack of

inches, Wright has the gift of uncanny judgment when he gets up to head the ball. He is unusually strong in the air.

Returning to the amazing Wright consistency. As Billy nears his 100th international cap, he has every right to feel proud of the fact that, since first playing for England in 1946, he has been dropped only once—in 1951 when Billy Nicholson was given the right-half position against Portugal, his only England honour.

The cynics may claim there has been little opposition for Wright's position, but I would not agree. At right-half, Billy had to hold off the challenge of Harry Johnston, Tim Ward, Phil Taylor, Willie Watson, and others, in addition to the 'perpetual twelfth man' Billy Nicholson.

In so many ways, Wright is a wonderful chap to have in your team, and a fine skipper. Yet, off the field, he is as unspoiled as on the day he first played for his country . . . a shining example of wholehearted endeavour for any young footballer to copy. Youngsters coming into the international team for the first time are immediately put at their ease when captain Wright takes them on one side to advise, 'Play your normal club game, and don't let the big match atmosphere upset you. Do the best you can and I'll be helping you all the time.'

When a man is on a pedestal, as Billy Wright must inevitably be, it often occurs that others, envious of his fame, try to topple him. That does not happen in Billy's case. His disarming charm and personality completely immobilize any would-be mischief makers, and I can truthfully say that I have never heard a colleague have a wrong word with Wright, either on or off the field.

Until this season, Billy Wright was regarded as soccer's most eligible bachelor. Although he strongly denied that he was in any way a woman-hater, Billy's dedication to his football had always proved too fearsome a foe for any girl to tackle. That is why I was surprised when Billy in the England team hotel in London came up and said, 'If you're staying in tonight, Tom, I'd like you to meet my Joy!'

Billy's Joy turned out to be Joy Beverley, one of the famous television Beverley sisters. She impressed me as being a very nice type of girl, but it was a real 'turn up' for the book, finding 'bachelor Billy' attached to a glamorous show-business personality. I decided he was something of a dark horse, at the wooing business.

There were repercussions later, in Gothenburg, when Billy wrote an affectionate letter to Joy, and somehow or other, that letter found its way into a daily newspaper. He had to put up with merciless leg-pulling from the lads, even though every one of them was probably writing similar letters to wives or girl friends. It's slightly different, though, when that type of letter appears in print for all and sundry to read.

Billy was not laughing: he was terribly embarrassed, and on the following day, he was downright annoyed when another newspaper published an old picture of Joy Beverley's first wedding. He was disgusted, commenting to me, 'You'd think the papers would have something more important to do.'

This was hardly the most suitable thing to happen in the middle of a World Cup competition. It is a great pity it had to happen to Billy Wright, of all people, because that sort of publicity can be terribly upsetting.

However, when you're blessed with the Wright temperament, those things are soon forgotten. It made not a scrap of difference to his football, and I am sure that Billy will continue to play his heart out for club and country for several seasons to come: because like Stanley Matthews and myself—and the other alleged old 'uns who are advised so often to retire—Billy Wright loves this game of ours.

Another player who so obviously enjoyed every minute of his football—still does, I imagine, even in non-League soccer—is a bundle of energy from Blackpool called Stanley Mortensen. 'Morty', as he was known by everyone, had the biggest heart the game has ever known, and I would describe him as the finest match winner I have ever seen or played with. Give Morty half a chance, and you gave him a goal. Here was a striking case of a man who was never a football artist, becoming a truly great player. In other words he used to the utmost every ounce of ability contained in his chunky frame.

Morty's main virtues were his speed, his positional sense—he had that happy knack of always being in the right place at the right time—and the fact that he never knew when he was beaten.

It was almost uncanny the understanding built up between the two Blackpool Stans—Matthews and Mortensen. When Matthews beat his man and pushed the ball into the middle, he knew instinctively that Morty would be in just the right position to finish off the good work and score a goal. Often I have heard

Morty's goal-scoring efforts played down with such remarks as, 'He only had to tap the ball into the net,' but how many critics stop to think that the goal-scorer, in such cases, deserves great credit *for being on the spot to do it*?

The 1952–3 FA Cup Final will always be referred to as 'Matthews' match', and indeed the great Stanley well merited all the wonderful descriptions of his performance on that occasion: but let it not be forgotten that this other Stanley, Mortensen, scored three goals, the only Wembley Cup Final hat trick in history, and did untold damage to the Bolton Wanderers defence.

I always thought Morty had much in common with my Preston North End colleague, Charlie Wayman. When you're as small as Wayman and Mortensen, and still manage to score 200 League goals as a centre-forward, you must have been pretty good.

Stan Mortensen played so many memorable games, I could not attempt even to list them all in the space at my disposal, but two which stand out, perhaps, above the rest were England *v.* Sweden at Highbury in 1948, and Italy *v.* England in Turin a few months later in the same year.

At Highbury a very good Swedish side was beaten 4—2, a result which many attributed almost entirely to a fantastic display from Morty. At Turin, Morty was again magnificent in a 4—0 victory, and after the match, he became the idol of those not-easily-pleased Italians. Half a dozen Italian clubs would have paid huge fees for his services at that time, but Blackpool were in no mood to part. It is fortunate for English football that Morty was kept at the seaside.

So much for Mortensen the footballer. Morty the man was blessed with a wonderful personality. I have never met a colleague with whom it was so easy to get along, but perhaps that was only to be expected . . . because Stan Mortensen not only played his heart out on the field, he would also give his heart to a stranger on the street. English soccer would be the richer for a few more of the Morty type.

A charge frequently levelled at football folk is that we tend to live in the past. If this be a crime, then I must plead guilty, because the man I intend to discuss next has not represented his country since 1952. His name? Wilf Mannion: small, fair-haired will o' the wisp, the pride of Tees-side, and as gifted an inside-forward as club or country could wish for—even in the vintage years.

Wilf Mannion was more than a footballer: he had the chest and

shoulders of a bantamweight boxer, and the dainty footwork of a prima ballerina. A delight to watch, in action with his hands at right angles to his wrists, the more to assist his impeccable balance, he was a joy to play with, as any winger who has partnered him would agree.

Like Billy Wright and Stan Mortensen, Mannion was not a big fellow, in fact all three should put to shame the many club managers who have no use for players unless they be at least 'X' feet and inches in height.

Wilf, like those Brazilians, was a 'fairy' on the football field—but a fairy with dynamite in his boots. How seldom one comes across an immaculate 'ball artist' who also scores goals, lots of goals. Mannion was one. In my first international match, against Ireland at Belfast in 1946, Wilf Mannion played inside-left for England. He provided those Irish spectators with an exhibition of the soccer arts about which they still talk; gave his opposite number (one Johnny Carey who is, himself, a legend in the game) a terrible running around and, to cap it all, scored three great goals.

That was Wilf Mannion on song. What a pity his career as an international player was so comparatively short. No wonder a World-Cup-harassed Walter Winterbottom said in Gothenburg in June 1958, 'I'd give a lot for Wilf Mannion right now!' But Wilf was not with us. He fell out with his club, Middlesbrough, and later drifted into the Third Division and to various non-League clubs, causing those who did not know him personally to imagine he was what is called a 'difficult' player.

Wilf Mannion was *not* a difficult man to get on with. I should know: Wilf and I often shared a room when England travelled abroad on football tours, and for the information of those who have criticized him, I must state that he went to great lengths to keep in good physical condition. Wilf Mannion was tremendously keen on his soccer, and because of that, always looked after himself.

Only once did I find him truculent and, on that occasion, I must say he had a fair amount of justification for his feelings. It was after the USA had achieved the craziest result ever known in football by beating England at Belo Horizonte in the 1950 World Cup tournament. The England forward line which could not score a goal in that fantastic match was: Finney, Mannion, Mortensen. Bentley and Mullen. The axe was obviously going to fall, but Wilf

was very upset to think that it had chosen his neck for a target.

In the next game, against Spain in Rio, England fielded this front line: Matthews, Mortensen, Milburn, Baily and Finney. No Mullen, no Bentley and, much to Wilf's disgust, no Mannion!

Wilf told me, 'I'd give anything to be playing against those Spaniards. The selectors have sorted out a forward line that looks as if it can go places. How I would love to play in that forward line.'

It was the natural reaction of a disappointed footballer letting off steam, and for my money, such an expression of opinion could not be used as an excuse to label Wilf Mannion an awkward type.

One of the worst accidents I have ever seen in a big match occurred in the England *v.* Scotland international at Wembley in 1951, and the unfortunate Mannion was on the receiving end of it. He collided with Billy Liddell (it couldn't have happened to a more gentlemanly Scot), and Wilf suffered a severe fracture of the face. Blood seemed to be spurting everywhere—I remember my shirt was soaked in it—but through it all, the courage of Wilf Mannion was outstanding. Even as he was laid on a stretcher, he fought to get off: he was like a wild man as he told everyone, 'I'll be all right. I'll be fine.' Then Wilf fainted, and the job of the stretcher bearers, and later the surgeons at the hospital, was made a little easier.

One distinction of which Mannion may not wish to be reminded is that he was the only forward in an England team which slaughtered Portugal 10—0 in Lisbon, who could not score a goal. But he had a hand, or a foot, in most of the ten!

Let's move the calendar on a few years and meet another England inside-forward, a player the assessment of whose ability has split the country in two: Johnny Haynes of Fulham. If you're a southerner—more especially a Londoner—it's ten to one you regard young Johnny as the best inside-forward in the country. If you watch your football in the north, you'll probably have a very different opinion of him.

My own opinion is that Johnny Haynes is a very talented player. It could be that Johnny does not play up to the standard expected of him when he travels to the North, or maybe there is a certain amount of resentment against him because, like most players with London clubs, Haynes gets more national publicity than he might be given with, say, Blackburn Rovers or Derby County.

Again, some of Johnny's mannerisms on the field often infuriate spectators . . . the favourite one being the hands upstretched, head raised, speechless appeal, when a colleague fails to accept a Haynes pass. It can be very annoying, particularly when the gestures indicate annoyance with experienced players—and team mates—but spectators should try to realize that Johnny just cannot help himself. It's part of his make-up, and though unfortunate, I know nothing is meant by it: Johnny's trouble is he gets carried away by the match, and he's quite oblivious of the crowd, or sometimes, even his team mates. He is always keen to get into the game, and often shouts for the ball even when badly placed to receive it. His keenness is revealed in this way.

This shouting often appears to be something akin to bullying when you're sitting in the stand some yards away from the play. In fact, a story was published once of an alleged battle of words between Haynes and John Atyeo in Copenhagen. There were also rumours of Haynes falling out with Stan Matthews in a Belfast international—Johnny's first game for England, as it happens. Temperament takes a lot of explaining, and I, for one, seldom take notice of anything said in haste during the tension of an international football match.

I learned that lesson as a very young player with Preston North End, my teacher being my captain, Bill Shankly. Before I played my first game with Bill, he had a quiet word with me. Said Shankly, 'You'll hear me calling you every name in the book, but you musn't be offended. I play my football that way, and anything I say will be for your own good.' Bill Shankly was as good as his word. He really tore me to shreds for ninety minutes . . . but when the match was over, he shook hands and said, 'Well played, youngster.' A great player, and one to whom I owe a lot.

Shouting on the field is harmless, unless it is calculated to cause mischief. That reminds me of a Peter Doherty story. Peter was playing in one game, and was constantly nagged by the opposition wing-half, with such remarks as, 'Call yourself a player? I thought you were supposed to be good.' When this talkative chap eventually asked, 'How on earth have you got so many caps?', Peter had the perfect answer ready: 'I get my caps because I'm playing every Saturday against twerps like you!'

Apart from his gestures, and his shouting, Johnny Haynes has

also been criticized for 'starving' his winger, but here again, I refuse to believe Johnny has ever done this intentionally. The same charge was thrown at Len Shackleton, yet 'Shack's' wing partner at Sunderland, Billy Bingham, will tell you that he owes most of the credit for his soccer success to the service he received from Shack when they were partners.

Inside-forwards never neglect their wingers deliberately. In my second game for England—it was against Wales at Maine Road—my inside partner was Raich Carter, and I still remember Carter's performance as one of the finest exhibitions of inside-forward football I have seen. *Yet I doubt if Raich gave me a single pass!*

It was not necessary. The three inside men were Carter, Tommy Lawton and Wilf Mannion, and their brilliance was sufficient to sink the Welshmen without any assistance from either wing. Bobby Langton, playing at outside-left, was out of it as much as me. I heard it suggested afterwards that Carter didn't want to play with Finney, but that was just nonsense. The way the game was played, Finney was not needed!

That is why I take a large pinch of salt with all the tales I hear about young Johnny Haynes. In the few short years he has been at the top, Haynes has managed to make everyone in football talk about him. For that reason, he has earned a place in my chapter on personalities.

I could think of a hundred reasons for writing about Frank Swift, who died so tragically in the Munich air disaster. Frank's very presence in the dressing room was worth a goal start to his team, and I can think of no other player about whom the same could be said. Some of his off-field capers would have earned him a fortune as a Music Hall comic, but the stage's loss was soccer's gain.

I think Swifty's funniest gag was the 'mother and baby routine' he loved to perform with Stan Mortensen. He would tie a sheet around Morty, put a baby's dummy in his mouth, and with Morty playing his part to perfection and bawling like a babe, in would come big Frank, with 'baby Stan'—all eleven and a half stones of him—cradled in his arms.

Swifty was also a wonderful mimic, indeed one could almost taste the salt and vinegar when he started eating non-existent fish and chips from a non-existent newspaper. He could also bring the house down by impersonating a woman getting undressed, forgetting nothing from the careful shaking of each stocking as it

was removed, to the contortions required to remove the corsets, followed by the sigh of relief as they dropped to the floor.

Frank Swift scored his greatest triumphs away from home, on the Continent. The foreigners love a showman, and 'Mr Sweeft', as they called the big fellow, was taken to their hearts on so many of his visits abroad.

I remember one game in Switzerland when, with England attacking, big Frank was more or less unemployed. Suddenly he deserted his goal, went behind it for a chat, in goodness knows what language, to the spectators, and strolled back wearing a cap he had been given and eating a couple of toffees. Those behind-the-goal fans loved to see 'Mr Sweeft' collect the ball in one massive hand, and nonchalantly throw it fifty yards to a waiting winger.

It was during the Italy *v.* England game in Turin, Stan Mortensen's field day, that Frank Swift made some of his greatest-ever saves . . . as befits a man chosen to captain his country for the first time. After one particularly brilliant effort, the hopelessly frustated Italian centre-forward threw himself on the ground and beat the turf in anguish, screaming to himself what must have been the Italian equivalent of, 'I'll never beat this giant. He is not like other humans.'

Observing what was happening, big Frank sauntered out of his goal, helped the Italian to his feet, and patted him on the head, saying, 'Never mind, you can score some goals next Sunday when I'm not here.'

That was Frank Swift, a magnificent goalkeeper, a talented clown. But even a clown can be broken-hearted, as 'Mr Sweeft' proved when he made his after-dinner speech in Oslo following the Norway *v.* England international, Frank's last game for his country. As he spoke, Frank cried—and he was not ashamed of his tears. Big Swifty knew it was his farewell speech, and knew how much he was going to miss us all. Not half as much as we miss him, though.

One soccer personality—the most obvious one, surely—is missing from this particular part of my story. Why no reference to the great Stanley Matthews? There is a very good reason for the omission. I have postponed, for the time being, my 'Stanley Matthews story'. That is because Stan deserves a chapter to himself . . . and I shall be getting around to that in due course.

CHAPTER 6

English soccer must go back to school—and learn from the foreigners.

ENGLISH international soccer has reached the cross roads. The moment to make a big decision about future policy has arrived. There are two alternatives. We can carry on exactly as we have been doing for a hundred years, inspired by the maxim 'It doesn't matter who wins so long as we have a jolly good game'. Or we can try to find out what brings success to great teams like Hungary (1952–56) and Brazil (1958) and proceed to work on their methods. The very idea of learning about football from foreigners will seem unpalatable to many members of the old school, but the day has long since passed when England were the masters, and the rest of the world the pupils.

Obviously Brazil did not discover how to win the World Cup by accident. They planned, they worked, they practised. For years their goal was Sweden 1958, and when that goal was achieved, the Brazilians seemed not one little bit surprised. They had planned to win the World Cup, and the plan had proved successful.

Can we, in Britain, profit from this Brazilian lesson? Of course. Do we wish to learn from Brazil? I doubt it, although I feel it is essential that we should.

Once before, England's soccer reformers claimed they were going to follow the methods which had given a foreign nation supremacy over the world. That was in 1953–54, after Hungary had given us two of the soundest thrashings ever inflicted on an international XI. Our ideas had been proved old-fashioned, it was said, and they must be completely scrapped.

We would have to introduce new selection committees, revise all our training methods, give our teams continental equipment, and—surely the soundest idea of the lot—set up a panel of experienced club managers who would meet to investigate our blunders of the past, and produce ideas to get England back on top in the future.

Whatever became of that panel of experts? They met, once I believe, made their recommendations, and were heard of no more.

So a wonderful idea remained just an idea. The football-wise heads of Busby, Cullis, Mercer, Britton, Carey and Co., could be used to guide their own League clubs, but their advice was not sought for the much more important task of raising England's international football prestige. Could it be that those currently in charge of the international XI feel they know better than the experts? That I cannot believe. Surely the selection committee would not shun advice from men who have gained success at the game, both as players and managers?

Whatever the reason, the committee of experts had a short existence. But still efforts continued to be made, albeit mostly by individual clubs, to find out what made the successful overseas footballer tick. The 1954 World Cup in Switzerland attracted managers and other observers from several English clubs, and those men did not return from their expedition empty-handed. They had watched Uruguay and Hungary and Brazil and the others in training: they had taken notes, they had taken cine-film. They came back to their clubs full of enthusiasm, determined to open a new era—at club level anyway—in England.

In the following season, lightweight playing kit, and soft boots were seen in the tradition-bound Football League. Some teams came on to the field 15 or 20 minutes before kick-off time for warming-up practice with the ball and the question being asked by the average fan on the terrace was, 'Where do those silly B's think their new-fangled ideas will get them?' Yes, sad though it appears in retrospect, the new ideas were frequently ridiculed.

It was Eddie Lever, manager of Portsmouth, who introduced completely new training routines for his Fratton Park players, and whether they were good or bad, they certainly were at least new! At that time, any breath of fresh air in the stuffy, conventional, atmosphere of League club training should have been welcomed.

What happened? Portsmouth were not having a very happy season, and the 'knockers' were soon saying, 'Look at 'em. They've been taught to train like the ruddy Uruguayans, and now they're in the bottom half of the League.' It did not occur to the Pompey critics that, without those new training ideas, the club might have been in an even worse position in the table. We are too conservative in our ideas in this country. Anything new is regarded with suspicion, while the old methods, although out of date, are generally trusted.

So the brave, new, soccer revolution of 1954 ended almost before it had a chance to make an impression. In the circumstances, it is difficult to be optimistic about a post-1958 new deal being any more successful.

Having seen and studied the training methods of many foreign teams, I refuse to believe they train any harder, or take the field any fitter, than we. English players are physically fit: they proved that in the 1958 World Cup by finishing every game as strongly as, or stronger than their opponents. If stamina were the prime virtue, then all the other nations would do well to follow the English training routine. Where we fall down in our training—and this applies to both club and country—is in our work with the ball.

Leave any English team to its own devices with half a dozen balls. For half an hour, maybe an hour, the players will thoroughly enjoy themselves mostly by shooting in at goal . . . just as we did in the parks when we were kids. I consider it a waste of time.

Training must be scientifically planned. Even though it may be irksome to some, it must be organized and supervised from start to finish—as it is in Brazil, in Russia, and in Hungary. The ball skills should be practised, practised, practised. Faults, spotted during matches, should be rectified, even if an individual player is forced to concentrate on one particular weakness for a couple of hours non-stop. There is no substitute for practice. Regardless of all else, training time must be spent profitably, not wasted, however enjoyably.

Television viewers marvelled when they saw the fabulous Didi taking a free kick with the outside of his foot, and swerving the ball in a perfect arc. Didi (or Len Shackleton, for that matter) did not accidentally master the art of making the ball swerve. He worked at it for days, and weeks, on end—practising that one trick until he became proficient at it.

A free kick that dips or swerves must be more dangerous than a straightforward one. A ball trapped dead must be easier to control than one which bounces a yard in front of the player. A man with a body swerve must have a better chance of beating an opponent than a player without a body swerve. These are the points which have guided the soccer education of foreign footballers. They list the basic skills, work on them constantly, and do not stop working until they have mastered them. Nothing slipshod about it. Scientific methods of learning, supervised all the time, bring success.

If these remarks tend to suggest that *anyone*, provided he works hard enough, can master this complicated science of soccer, let me correct that impression. Unless natural skill is in the individual, no amount of tuition or practice will ever put it there. On the other hand, where the skill lies semi-dormant, it can be brought out and improved, providing the correct methods are followed.

Continental teams are always interesting to watch because the players in those teams prize ball skill above everything. I have seen some sides composed almost entirely of ball jugglers, yes, even down to the goalkeeper. It is sheer joy to see the many diverse methods used to bring a ball down and under control, methods you might never see in a full season of League football at home. A few home players, mostly among the older generation, can match the Continentals at this game. Jimmy Hagan and Wilf Mannion were two perfect examples. Jimmy and Wilf could do it because, like the foreigners, they had been learning it for years—probably with a tennis ball, in a back street somewhere.

I remember being fascinated by a boy soccer juggler—he could not have been more than 10 years old—on Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro when England were in Brazil for the 1950 World Cup Series. This dusky magician thought nothing of bouncing an orange a hundred times on his instep for the entertainment of the amazed English visitors. Would it be pertinent to ask how many members of the English football party—all star professionals who play the game for a living—could have matched that 10-year-old in ball (or orange) control? I don't think I would have liked to challenge him to a contest!

Until English footballers go back to soccer school to learn as the foreigners are learning, we must expect to come off second-best in international contests. Watch a Brazilian pass the ball. No lofted centre from the wing for him: no 40-yard long balls that need only be a yard out to be wasted. When a Brazilian parts with the ball, the man due to receive it is 90-per-cent certain to get it. When the majority of Englishmen part, there is often nothing better than a 50–50 chance of the ball reaching a colleague. Basically soccer is a simple game—I have said that so often—and obviously a short pass to the feet of a team mate must be more accurate than a long one high in the air. Not that I could completely condemn the long-ball game—when it is played well. But the short game must always remain more accurate AND MORE ATTRACTIVE TO WATCH.

Perhaps Stanley Cullis, whose own methods at Wolverhampton have brought that club much success, would not agree with me on this point, but I have always believed that real football ought to be played on the ground—and not in the air.

There are many other lessons we can learn from our former 'pupils'. We can learn, for instance, how they have mastered the art of always appearing to have an extra man on hand when he is needed. 'They seemed to have two men to every one of their opponents,' was a common reflection after those dazzling Brazilians had been performing. How is this done? There's nothing very complicated about it, really. When a player makes a pass, he does not stand still and temporarily drop out of the game. He keeps running, finds an open space, and waits for the return pass which invariably arrives . . . hence the impression of two men playing against one. In other words he plays without the ball, demonstrating clearly the wisdom of the old soccer saying 'When not in possession, get in position'.

Perhaps British players are too stereotyped in their positional play. A left-half stays at left-half, a right-winger—unless he be a venturesome type—remains on his wing. Each has a specific job to perform, but surely that is no reason for refusing to attempt another? There was considerable surprise in the first round of the 1958 World Cup when Brazil's left-back Nilton Santos took the ball the length of the field to score a wonderful goal against Austria. Santos did not think it strange, or unusual. After all, he had two feet, just the same as his forwards: he knew how to beat a man, and he knew how to shoot. I wonder how many Football League full-backs at home score goals—apart from free kicks and penalties. If they tried, they would probably be reprimanded by their managers for 'leaving a big gap behind them.' I don't think those gaps are important . . . so long as the player who leaves them has possession of the ball.

We must be more adaptable, more fluid. In football, mobility is tremendously important. No player can afford to remain static: he must attempt to create something, not just occasionally, but all the time the game is in progress.

To capture this creative urge, I feel the accent at every training session must be placed on ball work. This ideal operates at Preston North End, where players may have the ball out on Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and even Friday, if necessary, in every week; yet talking to players from several other clubs, I was

15. (*Top*) One of England's finest post-war international teams . . . conquerors of the German World Champions in November 1954. Back row, left to right: Trotter (trainer), Byrne, Staniforth, Williams, Wood (reserve), Phillips, Bentley, Kennedy (reserve). Front row, left to right: Slater, Matthews, Shackleton, Wright, Allen, Finney, McGarry (reserve)

16. (*Bottom*) Preston North End in the Second Division 1949–50. The author is in the front row . . . sixth from the left

17. (*Top*) The late Frank Swift enjoys a joke with the author, Stan Mortensen, and Wilf Mannion at Stockholm airport in May 1949

18. (*Centre*) In training for the 1950 World Cup Competition in Rio de Janeiro are . . . front to rear . . . Wilf Mannion, Bill Eckersley, Eddie Baily, Tom Finney, Billy Wright and Roy Bentley

19. (*Bottom*) The author takes a river trip in Turin in 1948 with Stan Mortensen, Wilf Mannion, Stanley Matthews and Walter Winterbottom. In the cabin are Frank Swift and Tommy Lawton

20. (*Top*) Tom Finney's 'natural' left foot has often proved useful on the right wing for gaining a yard on an opponent. In this picture, he is about to cut inside, to dodge a tackle from Fulham's Len Quested

21. (*Bottom*) A tackle that was not dodged—although the author had time to hit the crossbar with his shot before falling. An incident in the England *v.* Argentina international at Wembley in May 1951

22. (*Top*) Fascinated coloured footballers in Lusaka (Rhodesia) watch attentively as Tom Finney demonstrates ball control

23. (*Bottom left*) The coaching session over, a young Rhodesian examines one of Finney's international caps

24. (*Bottom right*) 'Finney on Football' . . . as broadcaster in a Kenya studio

surprised to discover that many of them were not allowed to see the ball from the close of a Tuesday or Wednesday practice game until they take the field for a Saturday match.

The motive, which seems quite ludicrous to me, is to make the players doubly keen for their League matches. 'It's supposed to save us getting stale. They're afraid we may be sick of the sight of a football by the time match day arrives,' explained one of these unfortunate players. What possible chance has that lad of improving his ball skill—unless, surreptitiously, he snaffles one of the 'forbidden' balls and takes it away to a public park?

If such reasoning makes sense, then tennis players should train without their rackets, cricketers without their bats and, taking this to ridiculous lengths, swimmers should practise on dry land. The difficult part of a young footballer's training is mastery of the ball. In comparison, physical fitness is the simplest thing in the world. What a pity so many trainers and managers reverse the order of priority.

Raich Carter had an exceptionally talented youngster on his staff at Leeds United: in Carter's opinion—and he should know—this boy had the makings of a truly great footballer, but the lad had one fault . . . he didn't like training. Complaint after complaint was made by the trainers. They called the boy lazy, called him a slacker, accused him of flatly refusing to work. To all their complaints, Raich had one answer, 'This kid has a spark of genius in him that you won't find in a hundred players. Let's work on that, for the time being. Forget his laziness for a while. After all, you can make a navvy physically fit, but he'll never play football like this boy.'

Always it must be remembered that each player is an individual, with his own likes and dislikes, his particular methods of training, and, indeed, his own way of living his life. We must not attempt to legislate for footballers as though they were a vast army of robots. They are not. Each one is different.

That is why it is so difficult to answer such questions as, 'Should you smoke? Should you drink? Should you be a full-time player with no other interests? Should you be single, or married?'

I suppose, being in business, I could be described as a part-time footballer, but I still train at Deepdale every morning from 10 until 12.30. It is a good thing for a player to have something

else on his mind besides soccer, providing his other activities do not interfere with the main job of playing football.

Is smoking a bad thing? Should a footballer drink? I cannot see much harm in either 'vice', providing it is indulged in rationally, and not to excess. At the same time, I feel a player is better off in every way if he does without either while he is still playing. I might smoke an occasional cigarette, but I hardly ever touch alcohol. Not because I am a prude, but simply because it does not interest me.

That reminds me of an article I was asked to contribute to a temperance magazine, an article which was supposed to point out for the benefit of young sportsmen the evils of drink. I wrote the article, stressing that a man who had nothing to do with strong drink, obviously had a much better chance of keeping fit than a colleague who took to the bottle. I was quite sincere, and never dreamed there would be serious repercussions later.

Not until I had loaned my international trophies to a friend for exhibition in a wine merchant's window! Those caps and medals were spotted by the editor of the temperance magazine, who then wrote me one of the most abusive letters I have ever received, pointing out how scandalous it was for Tom Finney to be assisting in the sale of alcoholic liquor. Strange how a good turn can land you in trouble. I might just as easily have loaned those trophies to a shoe shop or a grocery store.

Stanley Matthews has been in similar trouble—because his name was used to advertise a brand of cigarettes. Imagine a physical fitness fanatic like Stanley—who doesn't smoke anyway—leading young men off the rails!

No, you cannot say whether a man should drink or smoke. It is entirely up to the individual. Above all, you cannot be dogmatic about whether or not he should be married.

Billy Wright is (or, rather, was) the best possible advertisement for the soccer bachelors, because players don't come any fitter than Billy. At the same time, it is difficult to believe that Stan Matthews would have been fitter had he stayed unmarried.

A bad wife, of course, can ruin a player's career . . . just as she would ruin any man's career! A good wife is a blessing from above constituting, as she does, the perfect sheet-anchor for a young athlete to tie himself to. I think they should strike special medals for soccer wives (I nearly said soccer widows), for all the sacrifices they make to help their husbands do their jobs well.

With full-time training, plus a job, plus travelling to matches, and foreign tours—not to mention lecturing youth clubs and so forth on the occasional free evening—I am afraid I have not been a great help to my wife during the past 12 years. She has virtually brought up my two children on her own. But she tells me she understands!

My World Cup journey, although I played in only one match, was certainly not wasted. I think I learned a thing or two from the foreign players, and it is reasonable to assume that England's planners also found their fortnight well worth while.

It would not be possible, or desirable, to ape all the Brazilian methods: neither should we believe that, simply because Brazil won the 1958 World Cup, everything they do must be correct. For instance, I doubt whether it was really essential for the Brazil team to travel half-way around the world with a posse of doctors, dentists and psychiatrists to guide them: but Brazilian soccer does everything on a grand scale. They even had a Press party of 103 men!

My own football education has been improved in many ways, chiefly through the discovery of the dozens of different types of footwear favoured by the various nations. The football boot, as we have known it in this country ever since I can remember, has disappeared. I saw, and was given presents of, boots with soft toe-caps, shoes with no toe-caps, others with studs made of leather, or rubber, or aluminium, some to be screwed in, some to be nailed in.

By the way, Brazil played in shoes which could only be likened to Grecian slippers. We cannot laugh even about that. After all, they won the World Cup in them.

CHAPTER 7

Switched to centre-forward, a successful move . . . outside-left is NOT my position . . . would I partner Stanley Matthews?

BEING something of a utility footballer—I have played in every position in the forward line—a question often asked of me is, 'Which is your best position?' My answer might be termed evasive, but there are some things about which one cannot be truly definite—positions on the football field, for instance.

I like playing in any forward position, providing I play there regularly. At the moment, I suppose, I prefer centre-forward because in that position I have recently had two successful seasons with my club; but I would probably be just as happy at inside-right or inside-left, because those positions have so much in common with centre-forward, *as I play centre-forward.*

At outside-right, I am also quite at home. I ought to be, having played regularly there from my early professional days until a couple of seasons ago. **The position I like least of all in the forward line is outside-left.**

That may surprise a lot of people, considering that I am England's first choice on the left-wing, but so often I fail to do myself, or my team, justice on the left-wing.

That is why I have often been tempted to ask the international selectors not to play me at outside-left: yet I feel it would be wrong to *complain*—considering the great honour attached to international representation, whatever the position on the field.

Sometimes, after a disappointing game for England, I have wrestled with this problem, wondering how I could tell the selectors they were being unfair to me, by expecting me to play well in a strange position. On mentally putting myself in their shoes, I decided I would probably have done the same thing.

For years, Stanley Matthews was an automatic choice at outside-right, and for years there has been an England problem at outside-left. As I had played with some success in this problem position, I suppose my retention there, even when Matthews was dropped, was an obvious move.

So I would never complain about being picked by England at outside-left: indeed there would be no beefing from me if I played at right-back! As I said previously, it is a wonderful honour to be one of only 11 favoured footballers in the country.

To be perfectly honest, I suppose it is all because I have never really *settled down* as an outside-left, although I must have filled the position at least 30 times for England. Yet when Preston North End asked me to switch from outside-right to centre-forward, I took to my new assignment like a duck to water.

That is easily explained. As a schoolboy, and as a young player at Deepdale, my natural position was inside-left. I knew the inside-forward game thoroughly and, with that sort of grounding, it was comparatively easy to play a deep-lying centre-forward game.

Everyone in football seemed amazed when I made a success of the centre-forward position, not merely filling in for a few weeks to help North End out of trouble, but establishing myself as a permanent choice for the centre.

Perhaps my physique—hardly the accepted build for a centre-forward—was responsible: perhaps it was the feeling that, having been Number 7 for so many years, I should always remain Number 7. Whatever the reason, there are still many people to-day who cannot accept me seriously as a centre-forward.

Was the switch so amazing? I used to keep newspaper clippings of my matches, and a glance through them would seem to indicate that such a switch was not only possible but almost inevitable!

Spare my blushes as I quote a few:

> 'Preston must either find the inside-forwards who can exploit wingers Finney and Anders, or ensure that Finney, one of the most priceless assets any club could possess, is made the centrepiece of the attack, and not allowed to languish on the wing like a leper.'
>
> 'If ever England want to look for a centre-forward, we can tell the right place. It is in a little shop in Preston, Lancs, under a sign that says, "Finney Bros., Plumbers & Electricians". Tom Finney, as a centre-forward, is a revelation of what art that position can entail.'
>
> 'Finney's coolness and great skill when North End made a timely forward switch, put Portsmouth out of the Cup.'
>
> 'Finney at centre-forward split the Chelsea defence at will, and made openings for five or six goals.'

Those extracts are taken from different newspapers, going back

as far as 1947, and they do suggest that on the few occasions I tried my hand as a centre-forward, I had a certain amount of success.

Other critics thought I would do better as an inside-forward, especially after I played well against Sheffield United at Deepdale just after the war.

I quote from two reports of that match:

> 'Tom Finney, Preston's captain, showed at Deepdale that he is an international wherever he plays. At inside-right, he inspired Preston to their biggest win since early in the season.'
>
> 'Having appeared at outside-left for England, and outside-right and centre-forward for his club, Finney filled each inside-forward position at various periods of this game with such effect that his side gained two invaluable points.'

Perhaps Capel Kirby best summed up the complexities of the forward positions of Finney when he wrote in the *Empire News*, 'As a plumber, the Preston lad is the finest inside-left ever to play at outside-right.'

Although many folk still regard me essentially as a winger, my manager at Preston, Cliff Britton, wanted me in the middle—at least until the 1958–59 season opened. I have made the grade as a club centre-forward, but I would be the first to admit that I was anything but a startling success as an England centre-forward.

If a footballer possesses certain ability, he cannot leave that ability at home when he plays for his country. I am not making excuses, but I believe I missed something, some understanding, some operational plan, when I played for England. Tactics come into this and there is no doubt that a club side, playing together week after week must have a big advantage over a representative XI which plays perhaps six times a year.

Repeatedly I took up what I considered to be excellent positions, but the ball was not coming to me as it normally does in club games. At Deepdale, we have a healthy regard for tactics, often using the blackboard to plan match movements. That is why I feel, instinctively, that as soon as I leave the centre, Tommy Thompson will be going through in my place. We know our colleagues' moves as well as we know our own.

I played three times at centre-forward for England, the matches being against Wales, Yugoslavia, and Scotland, in the 1956–57 season. On my third attempt, I was given an inside-forward part-

ner who I hoped would help me to reproduce club form in England's Number 9 shirt. The player was Tommy Thompson, my Preston team mate, mentioned above.

Our success as a pair in club football had obviously inspired our joint selection for England but, unfortunately, that success was not transferred to the England side. We did not play as well as we had hoped. Afterwards Tommy Thompson was discarded, rather hastily, and I was no longer considered a centre-forward by my country. **Those decisions may have been premature.**

Why scrap a system simply because it fails once? Without blowing my own trumpet, I imagine the results achieved by Preston North End, and the number of goals scored by Tommy Thompson and myself, suggest that we are a successful pair. Yet, following one comparative off-day, the England selectors decided that we were not. I still believe that, given an extended run as international team mates, Tommy and I could have produced the results England expected from us. We were not given the chance.

Outside-right, outside-left, centre-forward ... I have been capped in all three positions, but few people know that I have often fancied playing at inside-right, as partner to the great Stanley Matthews. I have tremendous regard for Matthews as a footballer, and I am certain we could have teamed up—still can, in fact—as a promising young international wing! We actually were once selected as a wing pair for 'Old England' *v.* 'Young England', but I had to cry off with an injury.

Stan and I have a lot in common—a mutual desire, for instance, to inflict headaches on as many opposing defenders as possible. We often discussed ways and means of doing this, sharing opinions about how best to beat this player, or that one.

When Wilf Mannion was carried off injured in the England *v.* Scotland international at Wembley in 1951, I was moved to inside-right as Stan Matthews' partner. We fell into each other's ways as if we had been playing together for years, probably because we had so much in common.

Injury again provided me with the opportunity of partnering Stan when Johnny Haynes was carried off in the match against Yugoslavia at Wembley in 1956. Tommy Taylor came on as a centre-forward substitute, and I moved to inside-right in place of Haynes.

Once again Stan and I clicked, causing much speculation afterwards about the possibility of a permanent Matthews-Finney

right-wing in the international XI. It was more than speculation, though . . . it very nearly became fact!

Walter Winterbottom asked me, 'How did you like playing at inside-right, Tom?' I told him I had enjoyed it. He also wanted to know what experience I had of inside-forward play and when I had last been picked as an inside-right. This was obviously leading up to something. When asked if I would enjoy playing inside-right to Stanley Matthews, I said I would—very much.

With many of the soccer scribes writing that England must retain the Matthews-Finney wing, plus the chat with Walter, I thought the selectors might make the move. For some reason or another, there was a change of heart, and I was chosen as outside-left for the next international game against Denmark at Wolverhampton, with Duncan Edwards moving to inside-right. That is as near as I came to playing inside-right for England, but perhaps it is still not too late to have a try!

* * *

At the start of the 1956–57 season, I had never dreamed that, after a dozen seasons as Preston North End's regular right-winger, I was about to become a centre-forward.

Those were dismal days for North End. We had opened the season with a 4—0 home defeat from Tottenham Hotspur, and followed it with a 3—1 defeat—also at home—at the hands of Manchester United. On the second Saturday of the season, we travelled to London and lost 1—0 to Chelsea—giving us not a single point from three games, and an adverse goal average of eight to one.

At Stamford Bridge, our trainer (Jimmy Milne) who was looking after the side while we had no manager, asked me to move to centre-forward for the closing ten minutes or so—and I did. Returning North in the train, Jimmy had a long chat with me in which he pointed out, 'We're in serious trouble, Tom. Something has got to be done, and you're the fellow to do it. Will you have a go at centre-forward?'

I told Jimmy I didn't mind at all, and he said, 'That's fine. I'll put the idea to the directors. In our position, we've nothing to lose and everything to gain. I hope it comes off.'

Maybe I should have been concerned about such a major switch,

coming so late in my football career and, knowing it could easily prejudice my international chances, might have been excused if I had refused to take such a gamble. Those thoughts did not enter my head. If Preston North End thought I could do them some good as a centre-forward, then naturally, I would become a centre-forward. Being on the slight side, and not particularly tall, I knew I had none of the natural advantages of a centre-forward: on the other hand, I have always believed that, when a player is good enough, he is big enough.

North End's next game—my first as the chosen centre-forward—was at Old Trafford against the League champions, Manchester United. It was an evening match, and I remember driving through town during the afternoon, seeing newspaper placards proclaiming, 'North End sign famous manager.' I had no idea of the 'famous' manager's name until I bought a paper and discovered it was Cliff Britton.

My first reaction was: this is the right man to get us out of our trouble. The new boss had always impressed me as a shrewd soccer manager, and of course I had great respect for him as a player. I was convinced Preston had made an appointment that would pay dividends.

Before the game at Old Trafford nobody saw Mr Britton. Some of the lads asked, in the dressing room, 'Where is he? Why doesn't he show up?' Some were even beginning to think there had not been an appointment at all.

After the game—which I consider we were unlucky to lose 3—2—we discovered our missing manager. He had not come into the dressing room previously, because, as he explained, he had wanted to see us play before having a chat with us. Although we had now lost the first four matches of the new season, Mr Britton cheered us up when he said, 'Well played and hard luck. From reports about you, I feared the worst. But if this is how you can play, I've no worries at all about what lies ahead.'

The next match was at Deepdale against Cardiff City, and our new manager retained the same side. We won 6—0, giving a tremendous performance, and running the dizzy Welsh defence into the ground. What a start for a manager!

From that day, North End went from success to success. We enjoyed a winning run that took us from bottom of the League to third from the top (level, on points, with Spurs the runners-up) by the end of the season. Preston North End had found a manager,

and a centre-forward, and I think both of us were well pleased with the season's work.

Cliff Britton is not every player's dream of the ideal club boss. He has several ideas which some players would find it difficult to accept—for instance, when we travel, nobody is permitted to take an intoxicating drink. The boss explained, 'You'll be better as players if you don't have a drink, so keep off it. In fact I'd rather you stuck to soft drinks *at all times*. The first-team players can set a good example to the youngsters.'

I think this is a good idea, but I might be accused of selfishness, because drink holds no attractions for me personally. The majority of the players are like me—not worrying about liquor, or keeping late hours, so these rules have not really upset anyone.

Rules are made to be broken, which reminds me of a character called Willie McIntosh, who was Preston North End's centre-forward at one period. Willie was about the funniest fellow I have ever met in football, but his liking for cigarettes often used to drive trainer Hughie Ross frantic. Knowing his smoking habits upset Hughie, Willie McIntosh deliberately exaggerated those habits just to annoy him.

Willie arrived one morning for training and went up to trainer Ross to pass on the confidential information. 'Had a lovely breakfast this morning, Hughie. Five Woodbines and a cup of tea!'

Willie MacIntosh's best leg-pull, though, was on a train journey after he had been warned that he was again smoking too heavily. Leaving his seat, Willie went along the corridor in the direction of the toilet, and the trainer, giving him a couple of minutes 'to get lit up', followed and knocked on the WC door demanding, 'Come out of there.' The door opened, and out came a most indignant blonde charmer.

Meanwhile, Willie McIntosh was two coaches down the train. Enjoying a cigarette, of course!

CHAPTER 8

The Hungarians in 1954, the greatest side in the history of football . . . beaten 7—1 in Budapest . . . the World Cup in Switzerland . . . Gil Merrick is carrier of the can!

WITHOUT a doubt, the finest footballing side I have ever played against was Hungary in the summer of 1954. Unfortunately, or perhaps I should say fortunately, I did not turn out for England when the Hungarians came to Wembley and defeated us 6—3 during the previous season, but I was a spectator, and am not ashamed to admit that I came away wondering just what game we had been playing in this country for the previous few years. We certainly did not play soccer the way the Hungarians did, and until I had actually had the opportunity of matching my skill against theirs, I felt my football education would not be complete.

England faced a strenuous pre-World-Cup programme in the 1954 spring and summer. The team was not settled; with the exception of two or three regulars, every position in the England XI was open and waiting for the best men.

The big problems were at centre-half, and in the three inside positions. For four years, selectors had wrestled with the centre-half headache caused when Neil Franklin left home for Bogota. Chances had been given to Bill Jones and Laurie Hughes (Liverpool), Leslie Compton (Arsenal), Jim Taylor (Fulham), Derek Ufton (Charlton Athletic), Harry Johnston (Blackpool) and Harry Clarke (Spurs). None could claim the job as a permanency, but three matches remained before the start of the World Cup. England had to meet Scotland at Hampden Park, Yugoslavia in Belgrade, and Hungary—much-feared Hungary—in Budapest.

Harry Clarke was selected to play against Scotland, and the inside positions were filled by Ivor Broadis (Manchester City) and the prolific goal-scoring pair from successful West Bromwich Albion, Ronnie Allen and Johnny Nicholls. The selection of Allen AND Nicholls, followed in later years by the picking of another West Bromwich pair, Derek Kevan and Bobby Robson, was interesting because, with no disrespect to the four players

named, the choice of them seemed to be inspired, not so much by individual brilliances as by the mutual understanding of each other's play they showed.

For many years, there have been advocates of this policy. Obviously players who operate together week after week during the season must have a better understanding than those who meet for the first time in an international XI. This type of team picking is often favoured by the Continentals, as Hungary and Russia have shown us in recent seasons. Two clubs, Honved and Red Banner, supplied almost the entire Hungarian international team which humiliated England, and the Russians have often built their national side from the two Moscow clubs Spartak and Dynamo.

Perhaps that is not a fair comparison, though, if we remember that there are ninety-two alleged top-class clubs in the Football League, while other nations concentrate their talent in a mere handful of teams.

In theory I think it is a good thing to select groups from individual clubs (the Clamp-Wright-Slater England half-back line was an example), *but this should never be done if it costs a superior player with another club his cap.* If poor Duncan Edwards had lived, for instance, should England still have selected an all-Wolves half-back line? I doubt it.

England travelled to Glasgow in 1954 with at any rate many hopes resting on Allen and Nicholls reproducing their West Bromwich form in England shirts. The full team was:—Merrick : Staniforth and Byrne : Wright, Clarke, and Dickinson : Finney, Broadis, Allen, Nicholls and Mullen.

We won 4—2, but as a World Cup warming-up game, it was not a great success. For the next match against Yugoslavia another change was made at centre-half, with Luton Town's consistent Syd Owen taking over from Harry Clarke, but the rest of the side was left intact. That pleased me, because at Hampden Park I had struck up an excellent understanding with my partner Ivor Broadis, and I was not pessimistic about our chances of showing a thing or two to the Yugoslavs and Hungarians.

In case the reader may be wondering why Stanley Matthews' name is not being mentioned in connection with these important pre-World-Cup matches, it should be stated that, at this time, Stanley was suffering one of his several spells in the international wilderness—**apparently unwanted by his country.**

We could have done with him in Belgrade. The Yugoslavs beat us 1—0 with a scrappy goal in the closing minutes, although we were beaten much more easily than the score suggests. In defence, there was very little wrong, but the England forward line had a really poor outing. (How often this has been the case over the years.)

It was a frightening sight, during the last minute or two, to watch the Yugoslav spectators lighting torches from newspapers, illuminating the dusk with ghostly flares, but we were told afterwards that this is the normal Belgrade send-off for a victorious team. I wonder how many folk get free hair singes in pursuance of this quaint custom!

After the Belgrade match, Cajkovski, Yugoslavia's star wing-half, tried to buck up our spirits by assuring us that we had nothing to fear from Hungary in the next game. He insisted the England defence was strong enough to stop the Hungarians from scoring, and went to great lengths to tell us the right tactics needed to shatter the Magyar myth.

The first tactics, however, were from the selection committee, who made sweeping forward-line changes. I was switched to the left-wing, with Ivor Broadis also moving over to partner me. Peter Harris came in at outside-right, with Jackie Sewell inside and Bedford Jezzard playing his first and, as it proved subsequently his last, match as England's centre-forward. Jezzard was later injured with the FA XI in South Africa and had to give up soccer.

Allen, Nicholls and Mullen were all dropped, just as Eddie Hopkinson, Jim Langley, Ron Clayton, and Bobby Charlton were destined to be dropped four years later, following yet another disappointing affair in Belgrade.

With our 'new look' XI, England prepared to meet the supermen of Hungary. For some reason which I have never been able to fathom, many of the English newspapers fancied us to win! More than one decided, 'England will lick Hungary', and although there was no defeatist spirit in our dressing room, I am afraid I could not logically raise the same sort of enthusiasm about the outcome of the game.

As usual, our Continental opponents were kidding us that England were tremendously strong, and there was no possibility of another runaway victory such as had previously been won by Hungary at Wembley. This pre-match psychology evidently con-

vinced one of the England selectors, because shortly before the start of the match, he solemnly told some of the lads, 'The Hungarians are very worried about you. Remember they have never seen half of our players, and they're not fancying their chances.'

Ivor Broadis turned to me with a wink and said, 'Who does he think he's kidding? If the Hungarians are worrying, what about us?'

Ivor is a great comedian, and his dressing-room remarks ought to have been retained on a tape recorder for the amusement of posterity. I remember when he had taken off his boots after the Budapest match, he warned everyone, 'Don't touch them unless you're wearing gloves. They're red-hot!'

They should have been. We certainly ran around enough, but it needed more than hard work to cope with the brilliance of the 1954 Hungarians. They licked England 7—1, and despite our short periods of superiority soon after the start, and again after the interval, Hungary could have easily reached double figures. I felt sorry for Syd Owen, gallantly trying to tackle the onslaught from the fantastic Puskas, Kocsis and Hidegkuti. What a terrifying experience for Syd in his second international.

Those Hungarians were every bit as good as they had been at Wembley, probably even better, and the only consolation for England was the undeniable fact that few teams, on that particular day, would have fared better.

It may seem an odd thing to say, but I shall always consider that my 90 minutes of Budapest torture was a pleasure and an education. Hungary fielded the perfect football side, achieving what has often seemed impossible, by playing eleven brilliant individualists *as a team.*

Six or seven of them deserve to rank among the greatest the world has ever seen, yet their brilliance was always submerged for the general good of the team, regardless of personal honour or distinction. England were bewitched, yes, and bothered and bewildered, by a side of soccer sorcerers who, at times, seemed capable of reading each other's minds. This was the nearest thing I have ever seen to telepathy on a football field, and I doubt if its like will ever be reproduced again in my lifetime.

Yet, despite all the evidence to the contrary, there are some who would decry 1954 Hungary. I have met the know-alls who, in their wisdom, ask, 'How would the Hungarians fare in First Division

football in England?' I can answer that one. They would walk the Championship—by a record number of points. Ability of that magnitude cannot disappear just because of a few muddy pitches.

Again, I have often been told that Hungary's two full-backs were never good players. While not agreeing, I might ask, 'Did they need to be?'

Hungary gave something to the world of soccer in 1954. Let us not try to take it from them. Let us, instead, dwell on the tribute paid to them, unintentionally, by Ivor Broadis in the dressing room after England were beaten 7—1. Said Ivor, 'That's the first time I've ever come off the pitch with a sunburned tongue.'

Scotland, at any rate, did not underrate Hungary. Six months after Puskas and Co. had rubbed England's nose in the Budapest dust, they played Scotland at Hampden Park. Before leaving for the game, my Preston colleague Tommy Docherty asked me if I could pass on a few tips about the opposition. I told him, 'I'll have an even-money bet that Hungary get at least four goals. You haven't an earthly, Tommy.'

As it happened, the result was 4—2 for Hungary, and—this should indicate the high regard the Scots had for the Hungarians —*it was actually treated as a moral victory for Scotland.* 'A great day for Scotland', proclaimed one Glasgow newspaper, which must be the strangest-ever description of a home defeat in which four goals were conceded!

Not surprisingly, the magnificent Magyar team were strong favourites to win the 1954 World Cup, but there were still plenty of optimists prepared to back the chances of England, regardless of Budapest and its lessons. The draw favoured us, grouping England with Belgium and Switzerland in what, on paper at any rate, was an easy section.

Stanley Matthews was recalled to take part in the first game of the tournament against Belgium, and with the defence unchanged, the front line read: Matthews, Broadis, Lofthouse, Taylor (Manchester United) and Finney. This was a match which looked like developing into an easy victory for England, thanks largely to a dazzling exhibition on the right-wing by Matthews, but our lead was pulled back and at full-time the score was 3—3. After extra time, we could still claim no more than a single point from a 4—4 draw. Team changes had to be made, and this was the moment for an experiment which was destined to give England

at last the solidarity at centre-half which had been missing for so many years.

I refer to the switch from wing-half of skipper Billy Wright, a move which undoubtedly added years to Wright's international life, yet it was made only as a desperate gamble to plug temporarily a defensive leak. Bill McGarry of Huddersfield Town came in as right-half, and with Stan Matthews unfit, the forward line was once more in the melting pot. Again, I switched from left to right, with Ivor Broadis playing inside to me. Tommy Taylor was installed as centre-forward, a position he was to fill with distinction on many occasions until the tragic Munich air disaster prematurely robbed soccer of his great talent; Denis Wilshaw played inside-left, and Jimmy Mullen returned on the left-wing.

England beat Switzerland 2—0 at Berne, the three points thus won from two games proving sufficient to take us into the quarter-finals for a meeting with the holders of the World Cup, the strong Uruguayans.

Conjecture about the team line-up caused several heated discussions, in most of which I seemed to be the central figure. I am honest enough to admit that I think I was a flop in England's two matches: nothing seemed to go right for me. Indeed, at that time, I thought I was rather fortunate to be an England player at all. The big question-mark concerned the two wing positions, and the fitness, or otherwise, of Stanley Matthews. Some football critics decided that, providing Matthews came through his fitness tests, I should be dropped, with Jimmy Mullen playing at outside-left. Strange to think that only a month or so previously, those same critics had elected me 'Footballer of the Year'!

Selectors, when they knew Matthews would play, decided to persist with the out-of-form Finney and, again with an unchanged defence, our forwards for the big quarter-final test were:— Matthews, Broadis, Lofthouse, Wilshaw and Finney. Uruguay won 4—2, and qualified for a semi-final meeting with Hungary (later described as one of the greatest matches ever seen), but I shall always consider England unlucky not to have earned, at the least, a draw.

The player deserving most sympathy after England's exit from the World Cup was Birmingham City's goalkeeper Gil Merrick. Naturally there was a hunt for a scapegoat, and it was Merrick who came in for most abuse. The Press were unmerciful and had their sole object been the banishment of Gil from international

soccer, that object was achieved . . . because Merrick has not played for his country since.

I should like to correct the impression, which seems to have been gained by many football fans, that this one man—Gilbert Merrick—was reponsible for England's being eliminated from the World Cup. Gil was never as bad as it was suggested. I know, and must admit, that he might have saved a couple of the Uruguayan goals, but those two errors—if, indeed they can be called errors—did not give Uruguay the match on a plate.

Merrick was very upset about all the criticism, and his depressing experience emphasized what a thankless job a goalkeeper takes on in every team. A couple of mistakes, or even one, from a goalkeeper, and he is liable to be called the worst player in the world. Yet a forward can make six bloomers, score a goal or two, and be hailed a hero. I'm glad I play in the forward line!

The big match of the 1954 tournament was, of course, the famous 'Battle of Berne' between Hungary and Brazil, the day when twenty-two normally stable soccer stars seemed to take leave of their senses, turning what should have been an artistic exhibition into a deplorable rough house.

Enough has already been written—too much, in fact, considering all the daily-paper fiction—about the scenes during and after this game, but I shall always remember it for the magnificent way the Hungarians overcame the handicap of an injured player, and still went on to win 4—2.

Outside-right Toth was struggling with a pulled muscle from the early stages, but so well did Czibor and the rest of the forwards shield him, one had the impression that Toth was every bit as valuable to the side as his uninjured colleagues. The Hungarians used Toth better than I have ever seen an injured player used, giving him the ball only when he was on his own, thus allowing him time to pass accurately, which was the only move he was capable of making in comfort.

What a pity Hungary could not win the reward their artistry had undisputably earned for them. In the final, it was Germany—in my opinion not comparable to the Hungarians as footballers—who carried off the Jules Rimet Trophy. Football is indeed a funny game.

The 1954 Hungarian soccer masters did not go into the record books as the champions of the world. But they went into my personal memory file—and that of millions of other football

lovers—as the finest team ever to sort out successfully the intricacies of this wonderful game. Their talent will never be forgotten.

CHAPTER 9

My first experience of 'under-the-counter' payments . . . the true story of the alleged Finney-Quigley feud . . . Jim Taylor's advice . . . a footballer hits back at the football writers.

Do so-called 'under-the-counter' payments exist in League football? Everyone *assumes* they do, that assumption being based on hints, second- or third-hand stories, and unsubstantiated 'revelations' which appear from time to time in the popular Press. After twenty-one years in the game, I have, of course, heard my fellow professionals talking about these payments, and I am not quite so naive as to believe that such talk, at least in some cases, is not inspired by fact. At the same time, being a Lancastrian, I like to have some real evidence before believing all I hear. *That evidence—concerning under-the-counter bribes—was supplied to me personally, during the summer of* 1949.

Preston North End had been relegated to the Second Division . . . and I do not mind admitting I was not relishing the prospect of playing in what, with all due respect, must be regarded as second-class soccer. My long career with one club allows me, I imagine, to regard myself as a reasonably loyal club servant. I am not, and never have been, a trouble maker: but occasionally there comes a time when a professional footballer feels he has excellent reasons for requesting a change of club. This was such a time.

An international player has everything to lose, and nothing to gain, when his team drops out of the First Division. I am not talking about the weekly wage packet, because with a good club, that will not be reduced. My problem was my place in England's international XI; and, without being too mercenary about this, the fees which went with it.

Like Billy Wright, Jimmy Dickinson, and others playing regularly for England, I had come to regard international fees as part of my normal income, and I did not want to lose them. Although Second Division players like Johnny Haynes, Alan A'Court, Ron Clayton, and Bryan Douglas represented England in the

1958 World Cup Competition, it was a rare occurrence, a few years ago, for international selectors to desert the First Division in their search for England recruits.

I like playing for Preston North End—in any division of the League—but **I also like playing for England.**

An international footballer has so much more to lose than an uncapped team mate, and I think I had a legitimate excuse for requesting a move. In this frame of mind, wondering whether or not to make the break with the only club I had ever known, I was presented with an opportunity to cash in on my dilemma.

Enjoying a stroll in Preston one summer day, I was approached by someone whose face seemed vaguely familiar. 'How are you keeping, Tom?' he asked. I said I was very fit, but that did not end the conversation. 'It's a bad business, the old club going down,' he said. 'What are you going to do about it? Will you fancy the Second Division?' By now, I was wondering just what was his angle. I soon discovered. In the best cloak-and-dagger style, he put his hand to his mouth and whispered, 'I've a very interesting offer for you. Get yourself on the transfer list, and I can put £2,000, tax-free, in your pocket.'

So this was how the under-the-counter merchants went about their work! Or was it?

I must admit I had my doubts. It was all too fantastic, and I looked at the 'con' man, wondering if he was completely sound in the head! He must have known I was a disbeliever when I asked, 'Where on earth do you think you'd get hold of £2,000?' I was told, 'Don't you worry about that. That's my side of the deal. All *you* have to do is to get yourself put on the transfer list. Then I'll arrange for a club to pay you the money . . . in cash, too.'

Only a hypocrite would say he was not interested in such a proposition. I have always tried to play football according to the rules—both on and off the field—but it is a great temptation to bend those rules slightly, when you are earning £10 a week and someone dangles £2,000 in front of your eyes.

In any case I am convinced that all rules preventing a man earning as much as he can should be erased from the book. If, as a public entertainer, I am worth £2,000 to somebody, why should out-of-date regulations prevent me from accepting it? With more realistic legislation, that sort of money could be paid without any subterfuge. It is wrong for a professional to be regarded

as a criminal when he is paid for services rendered. I shall have more to say about this in a later chapter.

There are other things in life besides money, of course. I was thinking about those things as I left my new-found 'benefactor' in that Preston street. North End had always treated me well, never hesitating to pay everything the rules of the Football League permitted.

Maximum wages had been paid automatically, as had all bonuses, benefits, and so forth. Being a native of Preston, all my roots were local ones, and all my friends and relations lived in the district. I was as happy as any footballer in the land, apart from the doubts on my mind regarding Second Division soccer. So much would have to be given up—in exchange for £2,000. Then, again, I had no guarantee that the money would be forthcoming. A whisper in the street could mean a lot; on the other hand, it could, just as easily, mean nothing.

More than anything else, I needed some good advice at that time. Only one man was in a position to give it, the late Jim Taylor, chairman of Preston North End, who had been something akin to a father-confessor to me ever since I had first joined his club as a kid from school. Old Jim Taylor was generally regarded as an exceptionally tough soccer character, and it wasn't everyone who could get along with him. To me, however, he was a genuine friend. We lived next door to each other, so I did not have to travel very far with my problems!

Coming straight to the point, I told the North End chairman that I thought my international career was in jeopardy. I explained I did not want to leave a sinking ship, and I was quite prepared to play Second Division soccer for a season or two. At the same time, North End's team was so poor that prospects of an early return to the First Division seemed very remote. 'We won't get back quickly —if at all—with this team,' I told Mr Taylor.

He was honest enough to admit that the future was not very promising with the side which had been relegated, but he asked what else had brought me to his door. I dropped my bombshell—and it scored a direct hit. I said, 'I can make a lot of money if I leave Preston' and I told him all about the £2,000 offer that had come my way that day.

Jim Taylor exploded. He was livid. 'You must tell me the name of this villain, and the club he's working for,' he said. I said I knew no more about it than I had told him, and even if I did, I

was not going to start putting people on the spot at this stage. Mr Taylor promised, 'I'm determined to find out—and when I do, I'll put this man and his miserable employers out of football for ever.'

He did not live long enough to carry out his threat, but he did see a wonderful Preston North End recovery, a recovery he forecast during that interview. Jim Taylor was a psychologist, and realizing my main worry was the North End slump, he went to great lengths to explain what the future held for North End—and for Tom Finney. He said, 'I've got great plans for this club. You don't have to tell me the team is not good enough, but I intend making signings, big signings, and the players who arrive at Deepdale are going to help you get us out of the Second Division within a couple of seasons.' He was as good as his word. Soon afterwards, Charlie Wayman came from Southampton and Eddie Quigley arrived from Sheffield Wednesday—the latter deal involving North End in a British record transfer fee.

Altogether more than £50,000 was spent—including about £26,000 for Quigley.

As I left Jim Taylor's house, I was in a more cheerful frame of mind. The North End chairman left me with the words: 'You should never leave Preston, Tom. You *shall* never leave. North End need you.'

I was flattered by his confidence in me, and had by now dismissed any idea I might have had about leaving the club. There was no demand for transfer, even with £2,000 at stake!

Having been so long at Preston, people sometimes regard me as one of the fixtures: I have a permanent place at Deepdale, like the turnstiles and the goalposts, and in the circumstances, it will surprise most North End supporters when I tell them I nearly parted company with the club during our spell in the Second Division. Oddly enough, it was the arrival of Eddie Quigley—one of the players on whom Jim Taylor relied in the promotion bid—that sparked off my decision to leave. Not that I had anything against Eddie, personally, but too many people *imagined* we were continually at each other's throats, thus causing an impossible situation to develop in the dressing room.

Nobody has ever suggested that I cannot take criticism when that criticism has been earned, but I was annoyed, very annoyed, to read suggestions in several newspapers that I resented the presence of another star name in the North End forward line.

Feeling in the town was turned against me. I was accused of refusing to co-operate with my new inside partner—soccer's costliest player, Eddie Quigley.

If Quigley had a poor game—and at that time, he was not settling very well—I was blamed. It is surprising how the public can be led by the newspapers. Certainly they were led during the Finney-Quigley arguments. A little hint of trouble, some minor criticism of a player, and the soccer supporters will soon start putting two and two together: unfortunately, they were getting the wrong answer!

Some newspapers devoted their 'Readers' Letters' feature entirely to the subject of a couple of footballers called Eddie Quigley and Tom Finney. They published columns every day filled with bitter letters, roughly half of which supported me and condemned Eddie, while the other half took his side against me. For no apparent motive, a Press-inspired wedge had been driven between two players, and it seemed that the only solution, the only sensible way to prevent dressing-room unrest, was for either Quigley or Finney to leave the club. I have kept some of the cuttings that appeared. Here are some extracts from them:—

'How many games has Finney won by his individualism? Because one or two games have gone wrong, a scapegoat must be found. Because a costly new forward has not yet shown what he can do, the crowd yell, "He's not getting the passes he likes." They think these must *all* come from Finney.'

'Quigley, although not shining yet, is one of the finest passers of a ball I have seen. The team would surely benefit more if Finney would get the ball across sooner.'

'Re photos of Tom Finney beating a man, not once, but three times: we see this every match at Deepdale. To my mind that is a waste of time. We have not seen promotion teams play that way.'

'Having suggested Finney was the cause of the trouble, perhaps you will now own up that, without him, we have a Third Division team.'

'In comparing Finney with past and present, I have no hesitation in proclaiming him second to none, and the most versatile player of all time. For the benefit of his club, and spectators, I hope this brilliant winger will be allowed to play his natural game.'

'I have watched Finney at Deepdale and elsewhere. He is

a very clever two-footed artist, but I think if he had sunk some of his individualism, it would have been better for North End.'

'So after a record year of bad buying it turns out the real trouble is Tom Finney! We always thought it was the inside man's job to feed the winger.'

'The main topic for weeks has been the Finney dilly-dallying which lets the opposition defence pack the goal. I hope, and so do hundreds of others, that Finney takes note of his critics and alters his play to advantage.'

'Who are you, that you think you can tell a player of Finney's ability and fame how to play football?'

'Like yourself, I hope Finney will not neglect his partner Quigley, for I feel he is just the man Finney needs alongside him.'

'Everyone I talked to after the Southampton game had some criticism of Finney.'

Yes, a lot of people seemed desperately keen to criticize Finney —simply because I had a new, and costly, partner, and we had not set the Ribble on fire!

The longer the campaign continued, the more depressed I became, until I decided something would have to be done about it. If the Press and the public in Preston did not like the way I was playing my football, the best thing for me to do would be to leave the club. As usual, I took my troubles to the North End chairman, Mr Jim Taylor.

Mr Taylor knew this was something more than a social call. He could see I was unhappy, and although he must have known the reason, he asked me, 'What's wrong, Tom?'

I told him, 'I'm being "crucified" every day in the papers, and apart from my own game suffering, the results of the team are being affected. It looks as if the only satisfactory way to solve this problem—for everyone's benefit—is for me to pack my bags. You'd better put me on the transfer list. I don't like getting the blame just because your new player isn't clicking.'

The Preston chairman refused to listen. He said, 'I told you once before that you must never leave Preston, Tom, and I'll say it again. Leave this business with me, and I'll see if I can do something about the Press campaign.'

That did the trick. The sniping stopped almost immediately, and I stayed at Deepdale.

The freedom of the Press—to criticize—must be preserved at all times, yet I sometimes think there is a little too much freedom for the football writers. Anyone can take hard-hitting, if fair, criticism, but too often the search for 'angles' and off-the-field stories means a punch below the belt for the professional footballer.

Look at the number of times Stanley Matthews has been 'advised' to hang up his boots. He needs to have only one poor game for the writers to rehash their stories on the theme of 'Leave us with our memories, Stan. Go out while you're still at the top. Let us remember the *real* Matthews.'

Stanley must get very annoyed when he reads those stories, and I don't blame him. What right has any football writer, whose personal football achievements are usually non-existent, to tell a genius to retire? It often amazes me when a journalist presumes to tell a wonderful footballer just what is wrong with his game, and how he should play it. A parallel would be for me to watch a house being built and to advise the bricklayer how he should mix the cement or lay his bricks! I am not very good at laying bricks, so I do not advise the bricklayer. When you are not a good footballer, you should not tell soccer artists how to play. In addition to being football 'experts', some sporting journalists are also 'experts' on cricket, tennis, golf, athletics, boxing, rowing, both codes of rugby and table tennis! In their cases a little knowledge, far from being a dangerous thing, is a most valuable asset!

Matthews is not the only footballer the scribes want to see out of the game. Every season, without fail, reporters ring me to say they have heard 'very confidentially', that I am playing my last season. They ask me to confirm or deny the rumour. I say it's a lot of nonsense, but I often wonder how these tales are started.

No doubt it will be a big story when Stanley Matthews or Tom Finney retires from football, but I do wish my friends the reporters would not try to jump the gun with it. I think I can speak for both Stanley and myself when I say we are as fit as we have ever been, and neither of us has any intention of applying for crutches or wheelchairs yet. Nobody will know better than Stanley Matthews when it is time for him to give up: nobody will know better than I, when I am ready to play my last game.

I should be the last person to complain about my treatment

from the Press; in fact a glance through my cuttings books could easily cause me to order a larger size in hats. The football writers have been good to me but, at the same time, the professional player so seldom has a chance to criticize the critics, that I trust my friends in Fleet Street, Withy Grove and other inky streets will allow me the privilege of taking these random kicks at them!

The writers are at their most terrifying when they concern themselves with international soccer affairs. They can be merciless when an England team is beaten. One of them was unduly hasty in consigning me to the international scrap-heap after I had failed rather badly against Wales at Sunderland in 1950–51. His headline read:—'This must be the fini of Finney.' Not a very good pun, that one. It certainly didn't make me laugh very much.

I met the reporter concerned a few months later and he greeted me with the prophecy, 'You're a certainty to play against Scotland at Wembley.'

I thanked him for his confidence, but pointed out, 'You wrote me off three months ago. How can I play against Scotland?' He admitted that I should perhaps be permitted an off-day once in a while!

When you wear an England shirt, you must expect to be in the public eye, all the time. You become almost the property of the footballing fans. To the reporter you are always a potential story, and you must be prepared to play ball when co-operation with the Press is requested. Your life is no longer your own.

So often, though, the man who writes the story is not responsible for the damage it does. My friends in the newspaper business blame their editors . . . point out that an editor briefs them to produce stories, **even when there is no story to be had.** This leads to the manufactured story which, though often no more genuine than a fairy tale, makes 'good reading' for subscribers to a particular newspaper.

Headlines are wanted, and by hook, or more probably by crook, those headlines are produced.

Look at the premature build-up given to so many young soccer starlets every season. Teenagers with no real experience are regularly hailed as 'Wizards', or 'Supermen', or that hardy annual, 'The finest young player I've ever seen.' Yet a lad of seventeen or eighteen, no matter what his potential, can be nothing more than a learner, on the score of years alone.

This sort of publicity is often resented by club managers be-

cause it can have the wrong effect on young, impressionable, players. In the past, Albert Quixall and Alan Finney, the Sheffield Wednesday 'twins', were given the treatment, and I am certain their games suffered: Arthur Milton of Arsenal is another who, with practically no experience of big-time soccer, was swept into the England team for one match. In his early days at West Ham, Harry Hooper also became a favourite of the London writers, who insisted that he should evict Stanley Matthews from the England XI. I believe Quixall, Finney, Milton, and Hooper—and all the other young players who were rushed to the top—would have been better footballers if they had not been accorded the doubtful benefits of publicity campaigns on their behalf.

Last season, a semi-hysterical outburst from Fleet Street very nearly forced seventeen-year-old Jimmy Greaves (Chelsea) into the international side, although young Jimmy had no more than half a dozen first-team matches to his club credit. How crazy can you get? Not surprisingly, Jimmy Greaves soon found himself, not in the England team, but back in the Chelsea reserve side, and that is the best possible place for a talented football youngster like Greaves to learn his trade, as his manager Ted Drake knew only too well. I will admit that when a player is good enough he is old enough, but he must be really exceptional to hold a regular first-team place or represent his country at such a tender age.

Perhaps the soccer scribes are feeling, by now, that I am after all trying to tell them how to do their jobs. I ask no forgiveness, while those same scribes are so adept at telling me how to do mine!

I would ask one favour of them. 'Please stop pulling the England players to pieces whenever they are licked by a foreign team.'

When Yugoslavia beat England 5—0 in Belgrade in the summer of 1958, our players were most severely criticized. We knew well enough that we had failed, but the witness for our defence should have been given a hearing before judgment of 'guilty' was passed. As I said previously, in my opinion few teams—not even the fantastic Brazilians—would have beaten Yugoslavia on that particular occasion. Players like Secularac, Milutinovic, Krstic, and Zebec and others reached heights which they may never attain again in a lifetime of football, and in the circumstances, there was some excuse for the England collapse.

Too often, when England go under, the main theme of all the

reports is the England flop. So seldom are the stories angled on the success of the opposition, even when that opposition is as brilliant as Hungary in 1954 or Yugoslavia in 1958. I would advise the football writers to tell the British public of the superlative skills so often displayed by foreign teams. The foreigners are not novices these days. *Neither are the England players!*

My last comment about the Press concerns the 'interviews' which never take place!

I had an experience of this when Preston North End played a cup-tie against Bristol Rovers a few years ago: although I did not play in the match, I was a spectator at Eastville, when North End were beaten after having strong claims for a penalty kick rejected.

On the day after the game, I read in a Sunday newspaper of an alleged interview I had given a reporter in the Bristol Rovers' boardroom. During that interview (which, believe me, never happened) I ostensibly said, 'Preston North End did not deserve to be given that penalty kick; we did deserve to lose the match.'

Imagine my position in Preston! People called me all sorts of names, saying I was guilty of sour grapes simply because I had not been playing in the match, and no matter how I denied all knowledge of the interview, the old saying, about where there's smoke there's fire, was applied—*and I was in trouble.*

This was obviously a case of mistaken identity. It must have been, because I had never entered the Bristol Rovers' boardroom!

Something had to be done. I did not expect the newspaper concerned to retract the story, so I consulted my solicitor. I rang the newspaper editor and did get the 'concession' of an apology, yet even then I was told that the reporter who had 'interviewed' me was still prepared to swear he had quoted me in good faith, and that *I had been in the boardroom.*

On that occasion it was probably a genuine mistake. At other times, there can be no excuses for manufactured quotes, and stories which are made up.

Having said that, I hope I still have a few friends left among the football writers. After all, it's not very often I am given the opportunity of telling them exactly what I think of *their* performances!

CHAPTER 10

Coaching in England and my criticism of it . . . the risks taken by managers with initiative . . . artistry disappears when the pressure is on.

WHENEVER an England international team is beaten, or the standard of League soccer slumps, the cry arises,' We must concentrate more and more on coaching.' Why this coaching business should be regarded by so many as the natural remedy for all soccer maladies baffles me. It is a fact that British football produced more great players in the days when coaching on a national scale was almost non-existent, than it does today. Yet the young player of 1958 is blessed with all the resources of the Football Association coaching scheme.

This is an extraordinary state of affairs, but it does not necessarily follow that high-pressure coaching is bad for the game—any more than increased coaching will *automatically* improve it.

Let us, first of all, get coaching into its correct perspective. A coach, in my opinion, is not a teacher—he is a supervisor. Teachers can give something to their pupils which was not there before. Soccer coaches can never bestow upon players—no matter how young the talent under their instruction—the *ability* to play football. If the natural ability exists, and this is absolutely essential, a coach may be able to improve it: this he usually does by getting rid of the pupil's bad habits, because often these are not apparent to the man guilty of them.

Unfortunately too many coaches, indoctrinated with rigid methods of doing their jobs, tend to treat young players as beginners and attempt to mould them into a predetermined soccer shape. This, I regard as nothing short of criminal, because in the process, a spark of genius or a flicker of artistic originality can so easily be snuffed out.

If concentrated, regimented, coaching could produce wonderful footballers, there is no doubt that Russia would be champions of the world: yet the Russians betray their 'playing to the book' background whenever they are in action. They have been taught a set style, and if that style clicks, then the Russians look an

exceptionally good team. If, however, their tactics break down, they can look like third-raters (as they did against England in Moscow) simply because they have no originality in their make-up, no unorthodox alternative to fall back on. Of course, there are exceptions to every rule, and occasionally Russia does produce an individual with footballing initiative—a man like outside-right Tatushin, or centre-forward Streltsov. It is surely more than a coincidence that these two players, perhaps the finest in the Soviet Union, were not included in the 1958 World Cup party because, it was alleged, their behaviour off the field did not measure up to the right standards.

I am not suggesting that the two named are the only world-class Russian footballers. Netto, Voinov, and Tsarev are outstanding wing-halves, while Valentine Ivanov (inside-forward) is both clever and thrustful.

If it is wrong for Russia to attempt to kill initiative, it is doubly wrong for England to do so. Yet it is happening, and unless coaches are warned of the danger, they could conceivably produce future generations of footballers completely barren of all the virtues which, at one time, made English and Scottish football the finest in the world. Indeed some football spectators believe the damage has already been done, judging by their continued complaints every Saturday about the dearth of real entertainers on the football fields.

In my opinion, the style of soccer being taught by some coaches today is responsible for much of the missing artistry. Managers, too, are often to blame because they refuse to concede that we can learn from foreign coaching ideas. Not all Continental innovations are winners, but I think we should give them a trial instead of sticking too rigidly to our own, sometimes, old-fashioned ideas.

Too many coaches work on the same lines as certain misguided football writers by attaching undeserved merit to what *they* regard as soccer's three prime virtues—directness, speed, and fight. They place emphasis on these aspects of the game, at the expense of skill with the ball. The fact that the England team of recent seasons has included fewer true ball players than in pre-war years would seem to indicate that the new trend has spread right through the game by this time, I feel we have taken a backward step here, even though England is not the only country favouring these methods. I heard it said several times when I was in Sweden that

the best footballing side would not win the World Cup . . . a forecast later to be proved false.

Perhaps Sepp Herberger, coach of the German international team, played a part in this revolution in English soccer. It was Herberger who stated, after England had beaten Germany 3—1 in Berlin in 1956, 'England will win the 1958 World Cup, because they are a team of hard fighters. Pure football teams do not win the World Cup.' Hard, direct, football was favoured by Germany —and by England—in the World Cup. Both countries failed, the winners being Brazil, who according to Herberger, could never be described as Cup-winning types. The Brazilian team was composed of eleven individualists with only one thing in common—the ability to play 'pure' football.

I should like to see a typical English coach teaching the Brazilians how to play football. I fear he would he hairless in a month, trying to make those dusky youngsters perform to any set pattern. There never has been, and never will be, a great football team which does not possess its quota of 'ball artists'. That is a fact which should always be remembered by those who would try to stamp out originality.

By this I do not infer that it would be wise to put eleven individuals on to the field and leave them to their own spontaneous devices. I believe every team can be improved when playing to a system, because a pre-match tactical plan must be important when you are trying to blend eleven units into one machine. This is as much coaching as any good team requires. **Anything more than a tactical plan is unnecessary.**

Not only is the unorthodox genius desirable, I believe he is essential. Football managers, directors, and supporters seem to want goals—at any price—and that is why speed and thrust now play an increasing part in the make-up of so many soccer sides. To make the speed possible, skill has been sacrificed, but I am yet to be convinced that this means more goals. Subtlety and trickery can still open the road to goal more effectively than bash and crash! Today the result counts above all else: promotion, or a League title, has become every club manager's idol, while relegation is, for the club boss, usually the end of the soccer road. What a pity we cannot forget all about promotion and relegation for two or three seasons, if only to take the desperation out of the game! That would surely help clubs to build real footballing teams on sensible lines—in their own time. The new generation

of Mercers, Mannions and Dochertys would be able to mature naturally, instead of having the eternal axe hanging above their young heads. According to Frank Broome, the former England winger now managing Exeter City, 'there are not a dozen personalities in soccer today. A few years ago, there were two or three in every team'. I think Frank is right, and our coaching *could* be responsible.

It is a bad thing to drill something into a player when it is foreign to his nature. He may be right and you may be wrong, no matter how many badges you possess! After all, England should never try to produce robot footballers.

Many coaches, and managers too, instil into wingers the necessity to centre the ball as quickly as possible. This supposed 'virtue' is also much favoured by spectators who, on countless occasions, have advised me to 'get it over'. It is the simplest thing in the world to cross a ball aimlessly into the middle. Any novice can do it. But I would never applaud a First Division footballer for doing it, because the chances must always be at least 60 to 40 in favour of a defender winning the battle in the air for possession. A quick cross, even a lob, can be made by a winger as a powerful weapon of attack—but he must be reasonably certain the ball will go to a waiting colleague. If I cannot be certain of the ball's destination, I would rather hold it and try to create an opening with my own skill. This is the moment usually chosen for critics to accuse me of 'holding up the forward line' or, another favourite cliché, 'allowing the defence to get back into position'.

Both charges, I refute. It should be remembered that, even though a winger holding the ball may allow the defence to get into position, **he also allows his forward colleagues to get into position.** Willie Waddell, a magnificent Rangers and Scotland right-winger, once wrote a flattering article about me under the headline, 'A Model Winger'. In his article, Willie wrote, 'Finney has a move that he uses to great effect, and one in which I myself have great faith. It is the chip back from the by-line *as opposed to the cross.*' Who is right? The manager, the coach, and the spectator, who calls for his quick, high, cross into the middle . . . or Willie Waddell, who prefers an accurate pass to a team mate? The answer is obvious, surely.

There comes a time when every player, even the 'speedy, direct winger' so favoured by some sporting journalists, faces his moment of truth when he must stop the ball and beat his man. The speed

25. (*Top*) One of the proudest days of the author's life when he became 'FOOTBALLER OF THE YEAR' for the second time in May 1957. Presenting Finney—the only player to be thus honoured twice by the Football Writers' Association—with his statuette is Bernard Joy, the Association chairman

26. (*Bottom*) A footballer and a trumpet player try to box, a boxer attempts to play the trumpet, and a comedian wonders just what is happening. Group from left to right: Mayor Singleton of Preston, Cardew Robinson, Johnny Sullivan, Tom Finney and Eddie Calvert

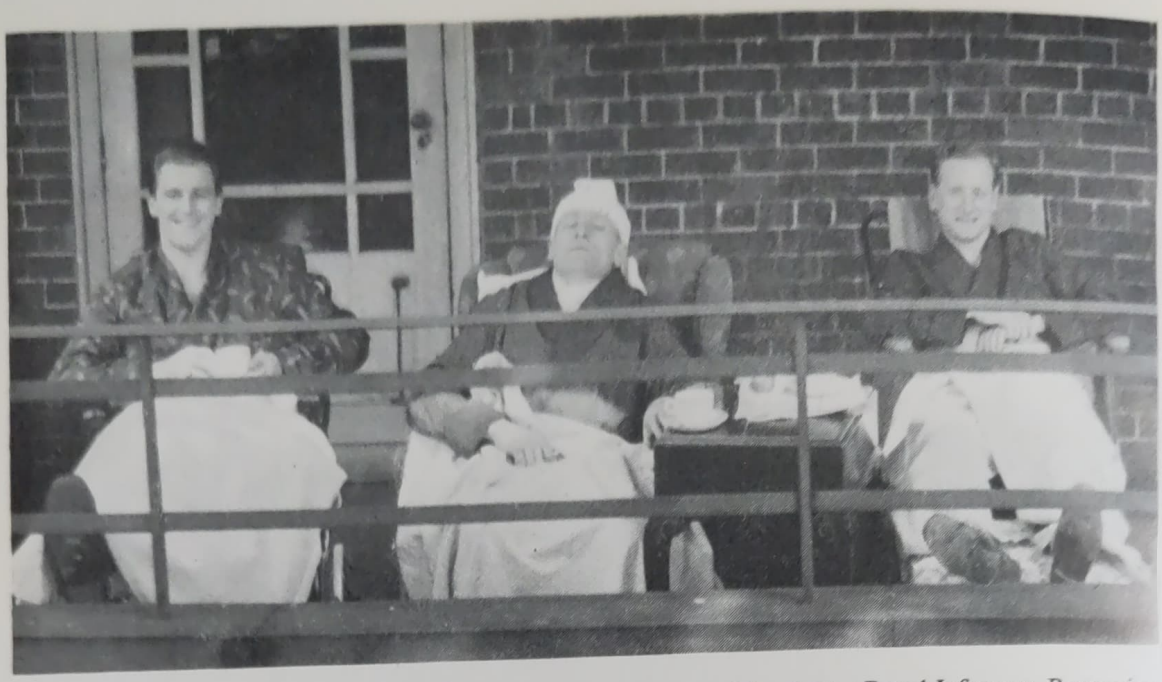
27. (*Top left*) The author is obviously critical as he watches his young son Brian taking a corner kick

28. (*Top right*) Daughter Barbara prefers riding to soccer

29. (*Bottom*) Footballers seldom spend Christmas at home, and Tom was enjoying himself decorating the Christmas tree, with some help from his wife Elsie, and Brian and Barbara

30. (*Top*) An England international trial is played at Nottingham for the benefit fund of the former England and Tottenham star, Willie Hall. England players, front to rear: Mannion, Finney, Wright, Stubbins, and Mullen; all shake hands with Willie Hall before the kick-off

31. (*Bottom*) No driving licences required as a group of footballers try some toy cycles for size in a Manchester store. Players in the group are: left to right, standing, Henry Cockburn, John Aston, Jack Rowley and Harry Johnston; while the 'cyclists' are Stan Mortensen, Johnny Carey and Tom Finney



32. (*Top*) Three great footballers out of action . . . on a balcony at Manchester Royal Infirmary. Recovering from football injuries were Jimmy Meadows and Bert Trautmann (Manchester City) and the author

33. (*Bottom*) It looks serious as Tom Finney is carried off the Deepdale pitch during a Preston *v.* Newcastle United match, but fortunately he was soon on the field again

merchant will be in trouble, but the ball player has an excellent chance of progressing. That is why artistry must never be sacrificed on the altar of pace.

This is the most important lesson we can learn from top-class foreign teams. The foreigners have managed to *harness* speed, to use it only when necessary: seldom do you see the Brazilians or Hungarians running themselves into the ground for ninety minutes. They are fast, exceptionally fast, but only in short bursts. For the rest of the time, they rely on their skill as controllers of the ball to maintain possession. It is an ideal combination.

Energy should be conserved, not squandered. That rule guides players like Garincha (Brazil), Schiaffino (Italy) and Fritz Walter (Germany), yet I wonder how many of the great foreign stars of world football would be tolerated in English League clubs.

They take their breathers, they often refuse to chase an opponent, they work only when it is necessary to do so. In England we are taught that it is a crime to be out of a game for 10 minutes or so; Stanley Matthews lost his place in the England team, not because he had lost one scrap of his exceptional ability, but because selectors were looking to the future and, rightly or wrongly, were determined to get a young man. Fortunately they found one in Bryan Douglas of Blackburn who, despite his depressing loss of form in Sweden, is in my opinion a worthy successor to Stan.

'So-and-so doesn't work hard,' is a common accusation in our League game. So what! A player like Len Shackleton, or Jimmy Hagan, or Stanley Matthews, could do more damage in one minute than the less talented 'workers' do in ninety.

One player who fascinated me with the way he conserved his energy was Hector Riall, who played inside-forward for Real Madrid in two European Cup matches against Manchester United in 1956–57. In ninety minutes of Cup football at Old Trafford, Riall did not appear to be a hard worker, but this most dangerous forward who, in an English club, might be regarded as something of a slacker, popped up from nowhere to score a vital goal. And I am told he did exactly the same thing in Madrid where the first leg of the tie was played.

Schiaffino plays that way for his club, Milan, and even the great Puskas was never a worker, in the true sense of the word, when he was achieving such amazing successes with Honved and Hungary.

These are all great footballers, but would England welcome them? Remember, in the past, that players like Ernie Taylor and

Tommy Harmer were available for transfer at very reasonable fees but few, if any, clubs bothered to make offers for their transfer.

I mention these points to emphasize how essential it is to have many different types in soccer. The coaching manual makes no allowances for a Shackleton looking to the right and passing to the left, or a Didi taking swerving free kicks with the outside of his foot.

Riall's colleague Alfredo Di Stefano is a different type altogether. Stefano is both an artist and a worker . . . and that is most unusual for a Latin American.

A good coach—and there are not enough of them—will make allowances for all styles and methods of playing this game of football, and will never work to any set pattern where so many different, individual, talents are concerned. To be a first-class coach, I feel, a man must have been a first-class footballer. All the theory in the world is poor recompense for the ability to demonstrate how a job should be done. That is where I believe England found a winner in Billy Nicholson, who did most of the team coaching while the World Cup was being played in Sweden. Not only was Bill able to tell us what he wanted: he could also show us how to do it, often performing the skills better than the internationals under his control.

Too often badge-winning coaches possess obscure playing backgrounds and, not surprisingly, fail to command the respect or attention of any but the youngest of the players under their control. Obvously young players must have coaches to look after them, and just as obviously the supply of first-class players and ex-players could not cope with the demand for coaching now being made by schools, youth clubs, amateur clubs, and even senior professional clubs. So inferior players become 'expert' coaches: the only alternative being a drastic reduction in the coaching now going on. I think such a reduction, though possibly looking like a backward step, would be preferable to the present set-up, in which third-class instructors have the power to damage the future playing prowess of England's footballers.

No coach should be dogmatic about what is required from each particular player. The centre-forward game, for instance, can be played in many different ways, and most have their virtues. Coaching can curb originality, and when it does so, it becomes a curse. If a team has a deep-lying centre-forward and he is experiencing very little success, he should be able to change his

game and perhaps stay upfield as a thrusting spearhead. Players must be adaptable, they must possess originality, and although adaptability and originality can be killed, they can never be taught.

Coaching, or the wrong type of coaching, may be responsible for some of the poor soccer seen on League club grounds every week.

If I had to advise coaches on the best way to go about their jobs, I'm afraid I would soon fall out with the majority of League club managers.

I would insist on banning the modern craze for speed, because, to me, it is an elementary principle that to be able to play football fast, you must first be able to play it slow. Watch a tennis coach teaching a youngster how to serve for the first time. He will concentrate on getting it done correctly—probably in slow motion—long before he ever worries about cannon-balls and aces.

Often, in international soccer matches, four English forwards will lose the ball to two foreign defenders, because of over-quick passing and the insistence on parting quickly, even at the expense of accuracy. A player passing the ball *in his own time* must be more accurate in his distribution than one continually remembering advice like, 'Don't hold on to it.'

On the other hand, let one English player try to get the ball from two Brazilian soccer maestros and see the difference. He would never get near it. The Brazilians would stroke the ball along the ground, man to man and back again at walking pace—putting accuracy in the pass before everything. That, to my mind, is how football ought to be played.

I might have different ideas about the importance of speed if I happened to be occupying the managerial chair in a League club, knowing that my job was only as good as my team's last result.

Managers like Les McDowell (Manchester City), Alan Brown (Sunderland), Vic Buckingham (West Bromwich Albion) and Cliff Britton (Preston North End), who are among the real planners of soccer tactics, are always on a hiding to nothing because pressure for League points is on all the time. There is so little time to stop and think in League football: 'bash on regardless' is the guiding motto of so many clubs. But I still cannot believe that a match will be won with eleven greyhounds!

The 'bashers' have their supporters among club managers, but, thank heavens, not many club bosses go to the extent of putting the result before the game by issuing 'chopping' instructions in their pre-match advice. There are a few about, and they are a

disgrace to the game. Dirty football is something I cannot tolerate: and those who actually encourage it are bigger sinners than the executors.

The toughest man I ever met was Uruguay's left-half Cruz, who played against me in Montevideo in 1953. At the start of the match I was giving him a rare chasing, in fact I looked like having one of my best-ever games. Then the Uruguayan coach came to the touchline to have a word with Cruz and I soon wondered if he'd told him the Latin meaning of 'Do Finney and don't bother to pick up the pieces.' Cruz 'did' me all right, coming in with a murderous tackle that ripped my leg open, and looked likely to cripple me for life. The injury later turned septic and I had a full twelve months of hospital treatment before it finally cleared up.

As one newspaper reporter wrote at the time, 'Finney deserves danger money when he's playing in this company.'

Another left-back I shall be quite happy not to meet again was Campanall, regarded by some as Seville's gift to Spanish international soccer, and popularly (?) known as 'El Bruto', a nickname which hardly needs translating. Campanall played against me at Wembley in the 1955–56 season, and gave the London spectators an exhibition of so-called football that would have earned him top billing at an all-in wrestling show. Every time I beat 'El Bruto', I was floored. If he missed me with his scythe-like legs, he used his arms to pull me back: his one mission in life seemed to be to stop Tom Finney, and he was not fussy about the methods employed.

The same Campanall had given Stanley Matthews a dose of similar treatment in Madrid a few months earlier, and even Stanley, the most unassuming of characters, had been sickened by it.

I remember that Sammy Crooks, one of my predecessors on the England right-wing, wrote an article about Campanall's stopping-chopping tactics in the Wembley game; Sammy suggested that, although he had a lot of sympathy for me, I would have escaped Campanall if I had been faster. He should have been playing against Campanall. Speed or no speed, I'm willing to bet he could have produced his quota of bruises as a souvenir of the occasion!

I am often asked how I manage to keep my temper in such matches, but that is not easy to answer. Off the field, I am easy-

going, I seldom get excited, and I suppose it is my natural make-up to be placid. That is something which cannot be acquired. Either you are excitable or you're not.

It always baffles me why players who have been fouled so often feel they must retaliate. After all, two wrongs never did make a right and, with a referee on the field, a player who repeatedly employs unfair methods must eventually come off second-best.

I am no saint. I admit I have lost my temper once or twice, and have even turned on an opponent meaning to have an argument. Just in time, I stop myself, but it is not always possible for an excitable individual to do so.

Although I have said that a few managers and coaches do try to introduce undue toughness into their players' games, I must point out again that they are in a minority. Whatever criticisms I may have made about coaching in England, I am certain that England would never produce international players of the Cruz and Campanall type.

Our coaches may not be the finest in the world, but at least they do try to show young footballers how to play the game as far as personal conduct is concerned. And for that we should be grateful . . . because it counts for a lot.

CHAPTER 11

Soccer abroad ... how the foreign teams play ... great personalities I have met on my travels.

I have had the privilege of representing England against no fewer than nineteen foreign football nations. This background, I feel, has given me a very good idea of the different strengths and the various styles of the soccer-playing countries of the world. Having often been asked to place the great footballing nations into some sort of order of merit—a World League Table, you could call it—I think this is as good a time as any to tackle the task.

With such an assignment, one must necessarily generalize to a large degree. Most nations, if indeed not all, have their seasons of soccer greatness and their periods of football depression: therefore, in placing them in merit order, it is more important to bear in mind their contributions to the 'world game' over a number of years rather than to assess them on a single factor; for instance, on the strength of their best eleven players at the moment of writing. I have no hesitation, under this rule, in placing Hungary in the number one position—even though, as we saw in the 1958 World Cup, the present Hungarian national side would not be numbered among the five best in the world. I shall also take into account the *potentials* of the different countries, keeping an eye on their possible future success.

Having said as much, I shall take the plunge right away and name my nineteen leading foreign footballing nations in order of ability. I exclude Brazil, and one or two other countries, only because I wish to limit these assessments to the teams against which I have actually played. I have not had the pleasure of meeting the wonderful Brazilians on the field.

Here is my World League Table:

Hungary
Uruguay
France
Austria
Germany
Sweden

Spain
Yugoslavia
Argentina
USSR
Italy
Republic of Ireland
Portugal
Switzerland
Belgium
Chile
Denmark
Holland
USA

That should spark off a few arguments! Looking through the list, it might be said that Spain, who have failed to qualify for two successive World Cup competitions, have been rather elevated, or that Chile, with the refreshing soccer approach of all South American nations, have been treated unkindly, or that Russia, rated a year ago as just about the best team in Europe, should be nearer the top of the list. However, it would be quite impossible to get unanimous approval for a list of this type, and as I discuss briefly each of the nations named, the reasons for my choice should become more apparent to the reader.

HUNGARY. I was in the England team beaten 7—1 in Budapest in 1954, and that was an experience I shall never forget. England then faced perhaps the greatest soccer machine the world has ever seen, a machine in which individual brilliance was amazingly harnessed to a team effort.

Of those Hungarians, I would name Kocsis, Puskas, Hidegkuti, and Bozsik as the real stars, with outside-left Czibor close on their heels, and goalkeeper Grosics, one of the best in the world. The Hungarians showed the rest of the world the deep-lying centre-forward game as it should be played—to perfection. Hidegkuti was the grafter, drifting about in midfield, and having a fantastic understanding with right-half Bozsik which created huge gaps in the centre for Puskas and Kocsis to exploit.

Despite Hidegkuti's deep-lying tactics, he was also able to score goals, plenty of them. His energy was unbelievable, as he defended in his own penalty area one minute and, the next moment, popped up at the other end of the field to score a shock goal.

The Hungarians must be at the top of my list. This nation has a natural aptitude for soccer, shown even now in brief spells, although so many of their great artists have left the country.

URUGUAY. Uruguayans love football. As spectators, they adore the ball juggler; they are fanatics, and as soccer talkers and students they must come first in the world. The jugglery so often, and unfortunately, condemned in England, has transformed Uruguayan soccer from sport into art. It brings results, too. For confirmation, just check on the winners of the World Cup since it first came into being in 1930. They are Uruguay (twice), Italy (twice), Brazil (once) and Germany (once). In other words, this competition which seeks to establish the finest footballing country in the world, has been won five times out of six by ball-playing nations. Perhaps some of the straight-up-and-down merchants should ponder this point!

I played against Uruguay in Montevideo in 1953, and the Uruguayans fielded half a dozen of their side which had won the 1950 World Cup. I thought Gonzales at right-back, Andrade (right-half), and the inside-forward trio of Schiaffino, Miguez, and Perez were great. Perez, in particular, is one of the finest footballers I have ever seen in action. It is amazing to think that Uruguay did not reach the final stages of the 1958 World Cup, although European raids on Uruguayan clubs must have had much to do with their failure.

FRANCE. French soccer has produced many brilliant artists. France is an attractive footballing nation because a blend has been achieved between the science of the Latin races and the straightforward characteristics of present-day British football. Thus characters like Marche, Jonquet, Barek, Kopa and Fontaine flit across the soccer scene, their names conveying hard-tackling, close-marking, ball artistry, and goal opportunism. A useful mixture, indeed.

In the 1958 World Cup, I thought France were undoubtedly second to Brazil in soccer ability; in fact, those Frenchmen might well have beaten Brazil in the semi-final had they not been handicapped by injury. Fontaine shattered the individual Cup goal-scoring record, while Kopa must have tied with Didi in any vote to nominate the greatest forward in the competition.

Since the war, England have played France five times, and the poorest French XI of the lot was, oddly enough, the one we met at Wembley in 1958 . . . only a few months before France went

to Sweden and did so well. But the French XI was an experimental one, and Kopa and Fontaine did not turn out.

AUSTRIA. I shall remember the Austrians for two razor-keen matches at Wembley in 1951, and Vienna in 1952. The outstanding Austrian footballer at that time was Ernst Ocwirk, ostensibly a centre-half, but in practice a man who 'invented' a new position of 'spare player'. Ocwirk's patrol area lay between the full-backs and the forwards, yet he was much more than a half-back. He was **the** key man, the man whose sole job it was to turn defence into attack, the man who, at all times, **had** to be given the ball so that he might set the team in motion. The Austrian defensive set-up was devised entirely to suit this one player, and at Wembley, his wonderful ball control and accuracy in the pass often had the England defence in serious trouble. A penalty, converted by Alf Ramsey, helped us to a 2—2 draw, but it was a near thing.

In Vienna, our match was referred to as the 'Championship of Europe', because at that time, Austria were beating all nations and it was hoped that England might be able to challenge their supremacy. We won 3—2, the winning goal being scored by Nat Lofthouse, who took the ball almost from the half-way line, before beating the opposing goalkeeper ... with the whole Austrian defence in hot pursuit. Nat was given the title, 'Lion of Vienna,' for his courageous efforts in that match, a game which I shall always regard as England's best fighting display on the continent of Europe. And what an emotional experience as hundreds of British servicemen invaded the pitch at full-time to carry us off ... heroes of the day. It really meant something to beat Austria in those days. And it still does!

GERMANY. Germany, like France, has attempted—with a fair measure of success—to marry what I would call Northern European soccer with the more artistic Latin style of play. The Germans play the game hard, they play it direct, but let nobody imagine that strength is the *prime* virtue in German football. Some great ball players have been produced, and I have no hesitation in naming Fritz Walter as one of the best inside-forwards I have ever come across, anywhere.

The Germans were not really given the credit they deserved for winning the 1954 World Cup in Switzerland. Even allowing for injuries and offside decisions which upset the Hungarians in the Final, *any* side good enough to beat Hungary, after trailing

0—2 behind, has earned its bouquets. Germany—or rather West Germany—had fine footballers in Posipal, Liebrich, Mai, Eckel, Schafer, and Fritz Walter. One wonders just what heights the Germans could reach if their country were not, unhappily, divided.

SWEDEN. For a small nation (in the soccer sense) Sweden should not be underrated. In post-war soccer, the Swedes have produced more than their share of outstanding footballers. For instance Jeppson, the Nordahl brothers, Carlsson, Liedholm, Skoglund, Gren and Co., are all magnificent performers, and it was a great loss to Sweden when every one of those players left home to earn a living at the game in a foreign country. Yes, the biggest problem for Sweden is not finding players, but keeping them. In the circumstances, I often wonder why the Swedes do not fall in line with other leading soccer nations and embrace professionalism.

It could be that, with memories of the World Cup as a guide, there would not be enough gate money to pay the players' wages!

The Swedish soccer style has much in common with that of Germany, but, then the Swedes and Germans are alike in so many ways. Physical fitness, and a serious attitude towards personal hygiene, count for so much in all Scandinavian countries, and particularly Sweden. This must help enormously in their preparation for football. I feel certain that if Sweden could keep her stars from emigrating, and play them together regularly in international competition, this nation would be most difficult to beat.

In the recent World Cup final, I thought the Swedes were unfortunate to catch Brazil on a brilliant day. The Brazilians made Sweden appear third-rate . . . but Brazil might have done the same to any country, that day.

SPAIN. This nation is soccer-crazy. That may be a good thing up to a point, but when the Latins become dedicated to a sport to the extent of its assuming life or death proportions, then it can do more harm than good. There are no half measures about the soccer-playing Spaniards. They can be brilliant, or awful . . . so much depends on their temperament and the state of the game. If Spain are winning comfortably, they are often the equal of any team: if they're losing, they are just as likely to throw overboard all semblance of discipline and culture, and become transformed almost into enraged animals.

Strong words, perhaps, but I played against Spain in Rio de

Janeiro in 1950, and during that game, the Spaniards produced some 'tactics' which have no place in soccer.

Again, at Wembley when England won 4—1, the Spanish players' stopping methods were often unsportsmanlike, to say the best and at the worst positively brutal! I was told, too, that this unfortunate trait was even more pronounced in Madrid in 1955 during an England Continental tour which I had to miss.

I have always felt strongly about rough play. If we cannot play this game according to the rules then we should seek some other pastime: all-in wrestling, for instance.

Star footballers in Spain become gods: they are worshipped, and that is a bad thing. They play to the gallery, they are prima donnas. Perhaps it is the bull-fight background, but it is quite comical to see a Spaniard score a goal, and rush over to the crowd ready to bask in the fanatical applause showered upon his head.

Let Spain get football into its *correct* perspective. Once that happens, the Spaniards *could* beat everyone.

YUGOSLAVIA. One of the world's most cultured footballing nations and, taking into account the size of the country, a great power in the game. The Yugoslavs play intelligent and attractive football, and are not very far behind those other Balkan powers, Hungary and Austria. I have played twice for England in Belgrade, and on each occasion, I was in a well beaten team. In defence, the so-called British style is obvious, but the Slavs' forward tactics involve short passing, occasionally overdone at the expense of finishing power. It was said once that the Yugoslav team could always play good football, but could never score goals. After Yugoslavia beat England 5—0 in May 1958, I think we would be advised to forget that tale!

ARGENTINA. Many South American enthusiasts are convinced that the Argentinian footballers are the greatest in the world. I cannot agree, and I would rate them inferior to at least two other Latin American countries, Brazil and Uruguay. It could be that I have not seen the Argentine team at its best, having played in only one and a half games against it. That 'half' game was the one in Buenos Aires washed out by rain during the first forty-five minutes.

The other match was at Wembley in 1951, and I have no doubt that our visitors' not-very-brilliant performance on that occasion could be blamed to a large extent on the unfamiliar playing conditions. There were actually puddles on the Wembley pitch

following heavy rain and I was told that the Argentinian player is seen at his best on a dry, hard ground, with a light ball.

In common with Spain, the mother country, the Argentine produces footballers who play to the crowd. They are masters of ball control, but again as in Spain, temperament often interferes with their game.

USSR. I do not think the Russians are natural footballers. They have been taught the game, just as they are now being taught lawn tennis, and they deserve the greatest credit for becoming so proficient at it. Remember, Russian soccer was comparatively unheard of before the war, yet so well did the Soviet soccer teachers go about their business, they were able to send a club side, Moscow Dynamo, to Britain in 1945 and outclass us at our native game! It should be mentioned, of course, that the Dynamo tour came at a time when many of our great players were out of the country on war service and even those at home were completely out of touch with concentrated, competitive, football.

Since 1945, the Russians have not made such progress as might have been anticipated, but they are taking such an active interest in all sport that it would be well not to underestimate their capabilities. They are determined to get to the top, and we have discovered that anything tackled by Russia is usually done well.

At the time of writing, England have played three international matches against the USSR, and in only one of those games, on the opening day of the 1958 World Cup, have the Russians looked like a really good side.

They deserve full marks for one very important aspect of the game . . . sportsmanship. Perhaps it is their military background, because they certainly have a regimented way of life; but whatever the reason I believe the Russians are as well behaved as any soccer country in the world.

I am sure, we can all expect a strong challenge from the Soviet Union in the future.

ITALY. During the past twenty-five years, Italy has been one of the outstanding Continental footballing nations, and at the same time, one of the most unpredictable. Even some eight years after the disaster, I do not think Italian soccer has completely recovered from the Turin team's aeroplane crash. Yet, despite the death of many international players, Italy were most unlucky to lose 2—0 to England at White Hart Lane in 1950: and I shall

always regard our 4—1 victory in Turin in 1948 as one of the greatest games of football in which it has been my pleasure to play.

Italy is a gifted nation as far as football is concerned. There has been something of a slump during the last few years, but it seems this has been caused by bad legislation more than by poor football. Too many wealthy industrialists are dabbling in the game, and it appears as if another strong and talented manager like Vittorio Pozzo is the biggest need at the moment to put Italian international football back on top.

Clubs, too, are not helping the game by spending huge sums of money to import foreign football talent. This must inevitably cause resentment among the home players, and deter Italian youngsters from making a career at the game.

Above all else, it should be stressed that Italy is blessed with great resources of natural footballers. That is why I feel it is only a matter of time before the Italians will be feared and respected, as in former days, by every footballing foe.

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND. Fancy classing the Irishmen as 'foreigners'. Still, politically, they must be included in my World League, and I hope that the few kind words I have to say about Irish football in the Republic will make me a little more popular than I have been on my two visits to Dublin with the England team.

The first trip was in 1946, a few days after England had beaten another Irish team 7—2 in Belfast. The Press were forecasting that England would have no mercy in Dublin, and one paper even went so far as to suggest that we might score 10 goals against our unfortunate victims at Dalymount Park.

Ten goals? We were the luckiest team alive to scrape a 1—0 win in the closing minutes—and I scored England's goal. Previously Alex Stevenson had rattled our crossbar with a shot, and Dr Kevin O'Flanagan had also hit the post. You could have heard a football stud drop at Dalymount as my shot entered the Irish net! What an anti-climax, just when the forty-odd thousand fans thought the old enemy was going to be beaten.

In the summer of 1957, England again played at Dalymount Park, and by the oddest of coincidences, a last-minute goal from our team again brought that eerie hush to the loudest crowd in the world, and for the second time, I played a big part in the goal.

It was in a World Cup qualifying match, and for almost the entire match the Irish boys had led 1—0. With no more than a

minute or two left, I was given a pass on the half-way line. I took the ball along the right wing, and centred. Up rose big John Atyeo to head the goal which was destined to eliminate the Republic of Ireland from the World Cup. Yes, I imagine, Tom Finney upset a few thousand Irish soccer fans on those two occasions!

The greatest day of all for the south of Ireland was in 1950 when the wearers of the green humbled England 2—0 at Goodison Park, Liverpool. I shall never forget Peter Farrell's inspired display at inside-forward, nor the amazing way the spectators invaded the Everton pitch when the final whistle was blown. No wonder Liverpool is often referred to as the capital of Ireland. I think there were more Irishmen than English at that particular match.

The Republic of Ireland has turned out some exceptional footballers; this, considering the frustrations they have to endure from the rulers of the Gaelic games, is amazing. I think of Peter Farrell, Alex Stevenson, Johnny Carey, Dave Walsh, Bill Whelan, and Noel Cantwell and start wondering just how strong this country might become if only youngsters were permitted to play soccer at school.

Perhaps Irish soccer owes more to one not-very-impressive stadium, though, than to all the great players I have named. Dalymount Park will always remain the Republic of Ireland's 'secret weapon'. As far as Englishmen are concerned, more reputations have been marred than made at Dalymount: it is the international footballer's graveyard.

How I wish England could, just for a brief ninety minutes, receive the encouragement from a Wembley crowd that Ireland expects, and takes for granted, from Dalymount Park spectators.

PORTUGAL. Often described as the poorest footballing nation in Europe, Portugal does not deserve the slur of that description. Having played against the Portuguese four times, I would describe them as delightful footballers without any forward punch. This used to be a common failing among Continentals, but most have rectified their feeble shooting. As soon as Portugal can do the same, I think we should be prepared for some better results.

My first game on the left wing for England was in Lisbon and it brought us a memorable 10—0 victory. On my second visit to this magnificent football ground, England won 5—3 . . . and I scored four of our goals.

There was also an international at Goodison Park, won

comfortably enough by England; and last summer, the Wembley game in which the Portuguese could have been two or three goals ahead in the opening thirty minutes. The trend, since the disastrous 10—0 affair, has been towards a big improvement in Portugal's football, and of course, I should not forget the 1955 day in Oporto when the unfancied Portugese achieved the 'impossible' and defeated England. I make no comment about that match because I was not on tour with England.

Portugal's short-passing game is pretty to watch, and often very effective, but still the forward weakness in front of goal persists. Summing up, I would say the Portugese will never rule the soccer world, but they are certainly not as bad as some people believe.

SWITZERLAND. It was in Zurich in 1947 that I first saw the deep-lying centre-forward game exploited, and the two players most concerned were the Swiss centre-forward Bickel and inside-right Fink. It seems strange to think that this style of play which has brought so much success to players like Hidegkuti, Kopa, Revie—and—I suppose, to myself—probably originated in Switzerland, a nation seldom in the forefront in football matters. Yet, for all the apathy and shortage of star names, Switzerland has given soccer several ideas which must have helped to a certain extent in the evolution of the game's tactics. The Swiss defensive system is extremely interesting, and at times, most awkward for an opponent.

If I can describe a Swiss defence without becoming too technical, I would say the two wing-halves mark the opposition wingers, and the centre-half (who, just to confuse the issue is probably the left-back) plays in line with them—and not with his backs as in most defences. Behind these three halves, the two backs keep towards the centre of the field as double stoppers.

This system necessarily means there are no men to mark the opposing inside-forwards, and they get more space than is usual. At the same time, an inside-forward coming through with the ball—despite all his space—must still beat three men to penetrate the middle. Close marking of wingers by wing-halves means that the winger seldom gets a 'flying start' and he usually has to rely on his skill with the ball to beat his man.

I do hope this is not terribly involved. It might be simpler with chalk and blackboard. Or, on the other hand, that might make it even more difficult!

Whether the Swiss defensive set-up is good or bad is open to question: but at least it proves that in one of Europe's smallest countries, the inhabitants do other things besides making watches, climbing mountains, and selling souvenirs to tourists. They still have time to think about football!

BELGIUM. A small nation, and not a very important one in the football world. No disrespect is intended, but when one starts thinking of the great footballers produced in recent years in Belgium, the list does not extend further than, perhaps, Mermans and Coppens.

But the Belgians are keen. They love to watch good football, although it must be very disappointing for them when so much of that good football is provided by countries playing *against* Belgium. The Belgian style of play is similar to our own, with the defence invariably hard-tackling. The most that can be said about Belgium's international displays is that a fair standard is maintained, but there is seldom any sustained brilliance.

CHILE. I have played only twice against Chile, once in Rio in the 1950 World Cup, and once in Santiago on a tour with the Football Association. So perhaps I am being unfair in criticizing them, but on the evidence of two games, I would say the Chileans are considerably inferior to Brazil, Uruguay, and Argentina, the 'big guns' of South American soccer. I look forward to the 1962 World Cup competition which will be staged in the humid climate of Chile.

DENMARK. It is doubtful if Denmark will ever become a great football power. Like the Swedes, they are strictly amateur and, again like their neighbours, they have suffered severely from the raiding parties of professional scouts from Italy. I have represented England against Denmark three times, and although each time we have trounced the Danes, it is to their credit that they have continued to play good, intelligent, soccer to the limit of their ability. The Danes are natural athletes, they are very keen on every type of sport, they are probably the nicest people one could meet on the whole continent of Europe, but as footballers I fear they are handicapped in too many ways ever to reach the top.

HOLLAND. A small nation, torn between amateurism and the professional game, and sadly short of world-class footballers. I have only one memory of a match against Holland, and that was the ease with which England defeated the Dutchmen 8—2

at Huddersfield just after the war. As a matter of interest, the English forward line which did the damage to the Dutch was: Finney, Carter, Lawton, Mannion and Langton ... which should be some consolation to the unfortunate side which had to accept that eight-goal thrashing.

USA. Think of United States soccer, and you think immediately of Belo Horizonte, and that black day in the English international soccer calendar when the Americans helped to ease us out of the 1950 World Cup. It was a freak result. I don't think it could ever happen again. It was our first effort as World Cup competitors and we were confidently tipped to meet Brazil in the Final. The US XI had been included, apparently, just to make up the number: but those Yanks beat England 1—0 after being on the defensive for about eighty-eight of the ninety minutes played. America had two shots at our goal ... one hit the post and the other gave them the only goal of the match! Let that sad occasion rest in peace.

At the Yankee Stadium in New York, England gained some sort of revenge with a 6—3 win in a match which will be remembered only for the fact that it was watched by 7,000 spectators—— surely the smallest crowd ever to see a full England international game.

Despite the brave missionary efforts of many enthusiasts, I cannot imagine soccer ever becoming popular in the United States of America. Why should it? Would we adopt the American version of football?

So much for the various virtues and vices of the world's soccer-playing countries. All have their different styles of football and, at this point, it would seem relevant for me to give the reader some idea of what I would look for when assessing the strength of players, or teams. I shall concentrate on the forward positions, because obviously I am more qualified to discuss attack than defence.

Starting with the wing forwards :

In a search for the ideal outside-right or left, I would look for :

(*a*) speed off the mark
(*b*) good positional sense
(*c*) good ball control
(*d*) shooting accuracy
(*e*) ability to master the art—and it is an art—of centring the ball.

The use of *both* feet is an added advantage, because far too many wingers today are one-footed.

Playing *without* the ball is something on which every winger should concentrate : the Continental footballers are past masters of this very important department of the game.

Thinking of some of the great wingers I have played against, or watched, quite a number possess the qualities for which I would look. Their names? Willie Waddell, Bill Liddell, Stan Matthews, Bobby Mitchell, Bryan Douglas, Jimmy Mullen, Johnny Hancocks, Gordon Smith, Garincha and Julinho (Brazil), Gento (Spain) Boniperti (Italy), Skoglund (Sweden) and Czibor (Hungary).

Wingers play a most important part in modern attacking football: they can be match-winners, they can score many goals.

Many enthusiasts enjoy watching ball-playing wingers who, while being great individualists, can also be real team men. Brazil and Sweden, the finalists, had such wingers in the 1958 World Cup.

On the other hand, some critics feel the winger should be direct and speedy, and does not need to be an artist with the ball. Both styles are useful, but I do prefer the ball player. Relying entirely on his own skill, he can beat the opposition more often—when the occasion requires it in a match. The fast, direct, winger has to rely much more on the other members of the team if he is to bring his particular type of skill into action.

Brilliant ball players are always a headache for an opposing defence.

Now for the inside-forwards. Having played as an inside-forward, I have no hesitation in describing this position as the most difficult on the field. The inside man must be the link between defence and attack, and as he is expected to cover more ground than anyone else, stamina is of paramount importance. He is expected to be something of a long-distance runner *and* a speed merchant. He must be a quick thinker, and a very speedy mover on the ball.

Inside-forwards come in all shapes and sizes and in all styles. One cannot generalize too much, although some managers' first concern when assessing a player is 'feet and inches' followed by 'stones and pounds'.

Perhaps it would be advisable to split the inside-forwards into two 'types'. There are the clever ball manipulators like Peter

Doherty, Wilf Mannion, Jimmy Hagan, Tommy Harmer, Billy Steel and Ernie Taylor, and there are the others like Ivor Broadis, Dennis Wilshaw, Dennis Viollet, Tommy Thompson and Harold Hassall who, while being hard-working players in midfield, are fast, deadly, and dangerous in, and around, the opposition penalty area. The ideal combination, in my opinion, is to have one of each type—a deep-lying schemer, and a deadly finisher—in your side. Examples of this were the Taylor-Robledo pairing at Newcastle United, the Carter-Doherty line-up with Derby County, and coming nearer home, Tommy Thompson and Jimmy Baxter with Preston North End.

The ideal inside-forward must be:

(*a*) a clever ball player
(*b*) a quick thinker and mover
(*c*) a hard worker
(*d*) a two-footed player who can shoot hard and accurately
(*e*) an accurate distributor of the ball.

It is advantageous if he can head the ball well, *but I do not consider this essential.* After all, Alex James, one of the greatest, seldom used his head . . . except to think with!

Among the foreigners, I would nominate Didi, Pele, Kocsis, Puskas, Liedholm, Fontaine, Perez, Schiaffino, and Gren as those who approach nearest the ideal required in this difficult position.

I shall always remember the fantastic understanding achieved by Hungary's Kocsis and Puskas—proving that the individual ability of all great footballers must be utilized for the benefit of the team as a whole . . . even if that means building team tactics just to suit one or two men.

What of the centre-forward? I consider this an intriguing position, while at the same time, often a heartbreaking one. The centre-forward must link the whole attack, and keep it moving—not a simple task when faced with the stopper centre-half. Many methods have been tried to shake the stopper, the most notable of which was the deep-lying leader of the attack (theoretically a contradiction in terms), as demonstrated so successfully by Hungary.

Manchester City introduced it in England, with Don Revie—a good ball player and an excellent passer of the ball—and City achieved a remarkable, and deserved, success with it. An impor-

tant figure in the Manchester City plan was right-half Ken Barnes, who linked up with Revie to turn defence into sudden attack.

We still have many English clubs—the majority, I would say—who prefer the older, more orthodox, style of forward play. They employ fast, forceful, leaders like Nat Lofthouse (Bolton Wanderers), Brian Clough (Middlesbrough) and Bobby Smith (Spurs). The main requirements from this type of centre-forward are speed, fearlessness, a hard shot in either foot, above-average ability at heading, and a robust frame to stand up to all the hard knocks which must inevitably be expected. The policy here is for the inside men to scheme the openings, and draw the centre-half out of the middle, thus leaving the spearhead centre-forward room to do his deadly damage.

I shall never believe that the centre-forward, or any other player, *must* be big, strong, and powerful.

Some of the greatest have been on the small side (Charlie Wayman, Ronnie Allen, Hughie Gallagher), relying on quickness and a good footballing brain. This type of leader moves about a lot, and maintains close contact with his inside-forwards at all times.

The Continentals are great believers in these tactics, to such an extent that in many countries, the spearhead centre-forward is not only in a minority, but is actually extinct! France's Raymond Kopa is the perfect example of the modern-type leader. A wonderful little player, but quite powerfully built, and above all, a beautiful mover when he's on the ball. Kopa is the perfect forward-line link: his understanding with Fontaine (in the World Cup in Sweden) was almost uncanny, as many television viewers in England will recall.

Di Stefano of Spain and Hidegkuti are other centre-forwards who have brought the deep-lying game to perfection.

Good centre-forwards are born and not made. It is not an easy position, yet I have enjoyed playing in the middle tremendously since I accepted the challenge to try my hand there a couple of seasons ago. I am sure my success as a leader was due to my having played inside-forward in my younger days.

The first problem facing me was . . . what style of centre-forward football would best suit my particular ability? I decided I would play like an *inside-forward,* but not too deep: the wings seemed the best place for my roaming—as I had played at both outside-

right and outside-left—and I was hoping I could take the opposition centre-half along with me 'for the ride'.

The intention was to leave the middle of the field 'open'. However, if the centre-half refused to be drawn, the ball was to be given to me. In this way, I found I had tons of room in which to work and use the ball to advantage.

None of this could have been achieved had it not been for the fine understanding I had with my inside-forwards Jimmy Baxter and Tommy Thompson. Jimmy plays the short-passing game, and plays it beautifully, while Tommy has a great eye for seizing an opportunity. In the positional sense, Tommy Thompson and I seemed to know each other's game inside out, an understanding which brought a rich harvest of goals for both of us.

As soon as the gaps were created in the middle, Tommy would be through . . . the ball usually being pushed to him by Jimmy Baxter. The wingers played a big part in the scheme by taking the full-backs upfield and giving me room to work on the wings.

To move to centre-forward so late in my career was a big gamble. But the gamble paid big dividends, none of which was appreciated more by me than the award of the 'Footballer of the Year' trophy in 1957, for the second time, *and for play in a strange position.*

I am pleased I moved to centre-forward. It gave me new problems to sort out. It gave me a sense of achievement when I had overcome them.

CHAPTER 12

Advised to give up football . . . I find a cure for back trouble by going to Africa . . . I miss two England tours, and go on one against doctor's orders.

An injury-free footballer is a happy footballer. Nothing causes the professional player more anxiety than a nagging injury which will not respond to treatment. I know, because I have had my share of trouble and, in fact, at one time I had almost made up my mind to retire from soccer. Had I taken the advice of my wife Elsie, season 1954–55 would have been my last. Yes, things were as bad as that, but it was a well-kept secret. Now, four years later, I can tell the story for the first time.

It was a nightmare season for me. Soon after it started, I was troubled by a backache which spread right down to my thigh. During matches I found my speed had deserted me: any sudden acceleration brought fierce pain, and not surprisingly, I had probably the poorest season of my career. The pain seemed even worse when I was at home, and I was actually compelled to buy a special cushion for sitting on. I felt like an old man because, apart from the physical pain, I suffered fits of depression, spending weeks of worry over my condition.

Often Elsie would say, 'Stop playing football. Your back is never going to get better while you keep aggravating it. Surely North End can get along without you.'

North End, however, were in no position to give any first-team player an extended rest. We were fighting for our very First Division existence, with every lost point another nail in the coffin of First Division survival.

Only once during that season did I represent England—the game being against Germany at Wembley. I had a poor outing, and indeed on my club form, that solitary cap alone was much more than I deserved. I had completely lost my zest for soccer, and was on the point of accepting Elsie's well-meant suggestion to hang up my boots. But I decided only one thing could be worse than the torture I was enduring—retirement from the game. The thought of having to give up was unbearable, not because I

visualized going on to the bread line without my football earnings, but because I really love playing football.

Looking back now, I realize I made a big mistake in playing when I was not fit enough to turn out. Maybe I am easily swayed, but whenever I did suggest missing a few weeks, or even a single match, I had been persuaded that Tom Finney, half-fit, was more value to Preston than another right-winger, fully-fit. It was very flattering to be told so, but I should never have fallen for such flattery. At this point, I feel I can pass on a word of advice to young players who might find themselves in a similar position: 'Don't, I repeat, don't, make the same mistake I made. Your physical well-being means much more to you and your club than any single match.'

Of course it would be unfair to blame North End for my misfortunes during this time. I admit I was easily talked into playing . . . because nobody feels like shirking when his club is struggling for vital points.

Christmas came and went, and my injury showed no signs of clearing up—indeed it was getting more serious every month. As the Easter matches approached, even the simple business of walking became a painful operation.

The Easter games were against Leicester City (like us, heading for the Second Division) and Bolton Wanderers. On Good Friday, Leicester beat Preston 4—2 at Deepdale, and on the Saturday we could do no better than draw 2—2 at home to Bolton. After the Bolton game I decided I'd had enough. I was not being fair to myself or my club. It was a big decision to take with the club so desperate, but I knew I was little better than a passenger anyway. I had no desire to finish the season in a wheelchair. I do not exaggerate. Walking had become an endurance test, and a wheelchair would have been very useful to me.

So I went to manager Frank Hill and, determined at last not to be talked into changing my mind, said, 'This is it. I've had it. I am not going to kick another ball this season. I daren't risk another ninety minutes in a North End shirt.' Frank knew I was serious, so an immediate appointment was fixed for me to have a thorough going-over in the Preston Royal Infirmary.

Going to the Infirmary, I realized I was facing the most important hour or so of my life. If my report was bad, I would be finished in football: and just then I did not see how it could be anything but bad. If permanent injury were the price I would have

to pay to continue in soccer, I had at bottom enough common sense to retire gracefully, despite the wrench. As Elsie had said so often, 'Your health is more important than anything and you should treasure it.' She was right, too. Not much fun in examining 100 international caps from a wheelchair!

At the hospital, my back was X-rayed, and I was interviewed by an orthopaedic specialist, the same man who had looked after Derek Dooley when the unlucky boy had suffered his terrible injury following a match at Deepdale. The specialist told me there were hundreds, in fact, thousands of people with the same sort of trouble that I was experiencing, and very often their aches and pains defied diagnosis. That was little consolation to me. I was determined to find out exactly what had gone wrong and, if humanly possible, get it put right.

Having been asked about every injury I had sustained in my career, I was told not to brood and was advised to report to my own doctor for the report on the X-rays. That meant more waiting time, more anxiety, more misery in the normally happy Finney home.

The X-ray plates showed nothing. My future was still in the balance and I was advised to rest and wear a sort of corset to give my back support. I also had to do special exercises.

My plans for that summer of 1955 had to be made, and obviously I could not hope to travel with the England team to France, Spain and Portugal on the close-season international tour. Preston North End were going for a short Scottish tour, and although I did not fancy the trip, it was suggested that I should go along just as a spectator—without playing in any matches.

Meanwhile I had a coaching-cum-exhibition tour arranged privately, a tour which would take Elsie and me and the two children to Rhodesia and, mainly for the sake of the family, I was very keen to go through with it. I had even been 'back to school' for several weeks in preparation, to a coaching course run by the Lancashire FA at St Annes. All types were at the course, from referees to schoolmasters, and young boys who had hopes of becoming future stars of soccer. At one session, Ron Stuart, now manager of Blackpool, was the coach in charge, and I think I shook the rest of the class when Ron called on me to demonstrate some of the ball skills. Those referees must have wondered just how much hidden talent they had in their ranks when I put on my performance!

I had also been studying the FA Coaching Manual, and was all set to make the Rhodesian trip—if my back allowed it.

A call on a specialist in Manchester decided me. His first words were, 'Take off that corset and throw it away. You haven't got a slipped disc, and there isn't a thing wrong with your spine.' He diagnosed sciatic nerve trouble.

If any women could have seen me removing that corset, they would have had the laugh of their lives. Now I know just what they go through when they wear one of those things. It was all buckles and hooks, and whalebone, and I was very happy to accept the medical man's advice to discard it for good.

I was told that my trouble was a damaged sciatic nerve, and the best possible treatment would be exercise so that I could work the ache out of my system. When I pointed out that any sort of work brought on severe pain, I was told not to worry about the pain, because it was doing me good! Having been assured that I was doing no damage to my back, I made up my mind to endure the pain, and make a big effort to get the trouble out of my system.

So the Finney family set off for Rhodesia for a six weeks' trip, knowing that, as far as father was concerned, the journey was going to settle, one way or the other, many problems. We visited places like Kitwe, Broken Hill, Ndola, and Livingstone, staying with English exiles and enjoying ourselves immensely. The hospitality was first-class, and I found my work—often among coloured players—very absorbing. The natives in Rhodesia are tremendously interested in English League football, and many of them—having gained their knowledge entirely from newspapers and the radio—are remarkably knowledgeable. They could often tell me the names of every player in a League side, and having such an interest in the game, they naturally proved to be first-class, attentive pupils.

My back was much better, but at the same time, it was a long way from being perfect. However I decided to test it out in an exhibition match between Northern Rhodesia and the Belgian Congo. I came through the game satisfactorily, and the locals were obviously happy when I scored all three goals in Northern Rhodesia's 3—0 win.

Although I was officially not supposed to receive any cash for the tour—I had chosen instead to have all expenses paid for Elsie and the children Brian and Barbara—the people at Kitwe

presented me with a cheque for £100 after the match against the Belgian Congo. It was a most generous gesture.

When our stay in Rhodesia was drawing to an end, I was asked if I would break my homeward journey to play a couple of games in Kenya. With confidence in my back increasing all the time, I accepted.

Arriving at Nairobi airport, I was met by a friendly reception committee and was told that I would be staying with someone who said he knew me, a Mr Archie Evans. I said the only Archie Evans I knew was an old Army pal of mine from Keswick, and they told me this was the same Archie. Sure enough it was, proving, as if our plane journeyings had not already done so, that it certainly is a small world. We had a wonderful week in Kenya, during which I played for Kenya against the British Army, and later for a white Kenya and Army team against an all-black side playing in bare feet. That match was won 2—1, but it was never easy. Those coloured players were very good, and hit the ball surprisingly hard and accurately without the assistance of any sort of footwear.

Although we had such an enjoyable time, Kenya was a most unhappy country at about that time. The Mau-Mau terror was at its peak, and the place was bristling with troops. Yet even horror has its morbid attraction, and I shall never forget being taken to see some of the places where really sickening massacres had taken place shortly before our visit. I was given a copy of the Mau-Mau oath, and realized just why those who accepted it were transformed into uncivilized heathens. Anyone embracing the Mau-Mau cult was obliged to commit the foulest of crimes; I shall not go into detail here about them, but the document made it quite clear that once you joined Mau-Mau you became the white man's sworn enemy, and you had to kill him whenever possible.

I was given details of an identification parade, at which a 'reformed' member of the Mau-Mau interviewed suspects, sorting out the Mau-Mau from the loyal Kenya natives, To protect him against a speedy assassination, this informer had his head completely covered with a sack in which eyeholes had been cut. He would have looked quite funny, had not the seriousness of the situation made the entire performance seem so gruesome.

We left Kenya with our memories—some grim, but many gay —and also with a handsome present of £200, which had been

given to me in appreciation of my two matches there. I imagine the gate receipts were quite good, because the 'house full' notices were up when 6,000 spectators watched the match in Nairobi.

The injury, which only a few weeks previously, had threatened to terminate my footballing days, was responding gradually, and there was no reaction at all from my matches in Rhodesia and Kenya. Only two weeks before the start of the 1955–56 season, we returned home, having had a wonderful holiday with all expenses paid . . . and I was £300 better off than before I had left. At such times, the life of a professional footballer takes a lot of beating.

I was now more hopeful about full recovery, and although the back trouble had not completely cleared up, I managed to get through that season without a lot of difficulty, although it was another struggling term for Preston North End. My speed was gradually returning, and I felt convinced it would be possible to regain 100 per cent fitness.

Now another headache faced me. For several years, my left leg had been aching slightly—a varicose vein was responsible—but as it was no real handicap, I had repeatedly postponed the operation which was advised by a doctor friend. The job had to be done, though, and following England's 1—1 draw with Scotland at Hampden Park in April 1956, North End arranged for me to go into hospital for the operation. That was the best time, because the close season was the only break allowing sufficient time for complete recovery.

It was a disappointment asking the FA not to pick me either for a Wembley match against Brazil, nor for the tour to Sweden, Finland, and Germany, but there was no alternative.

Stanley Matthews was able to take over at outside-right against Brazil—and what a magnificent performance he provided for the benefit of the many people who imagined his international days were over—but as Stanley was already committed to a South African tour, he, also, was unable to travel abroad with the England team. It seemed strange to have neither Matthews nor Finney on England's right-wing, but Johnny Berry (Manchester United) and Gordon Astall (Birmingham City) were chosen—Johnny playing against Sweden, and Gordon against Finland and Germany. I would love to have gone, but I knew I was better off, looking to the future, in hospital at home.

It is so difficult to say 'no' when you're wanted by your country

but I know I did the right thing when I missed the 1956 England tour.

Three years previously I had gone abroad with the English international party against the advice of my doctors (I hope this chapter does not appear to be developing into the complete history of my ailments, or an instalment from *Emergency Ward* 10.) England had matches against Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and the US—the sort of dream tour every player wants to make—but my dreams had been shattered by the medical opinion that only a complete break from soccer would clear up a groin injury which had plagued me for almost a whole season.

When I put the position to England's team boss Walter Winterbottom, Walter said, 'Please try and make the trip. You know this is a very important one for us.'

Walter tried to kid me that the groin had not affected my game, pointing out that it did not hamper me during matches, but I told him, 'Maybe not, but you should try a sample of the pain I go through at the end of every game!'

I meant it, too. I wore a tight strap-girdle affair to allow me to run properly, but was anxious to get the sort of treatment that would allow me to dispense with such artificial aids. And I had been told that the only real treatment was a summer break away from all football.

The England team manager had a word with the specialist, and I also went back to the hospital to see if I could possibly travel. The specialist was very blunt, warning me, 'Don't come back after your trip and say the groin feels worse—*because it's bound to.*'

The decision was left to me, in the end, and rightly or wrongly I decided I would go. Walter promised I would be spared as much as possible—and I was picked for all four international matches!

On that tour, the most memorable match was one which lasted no longer than twenty minutes. It was in Buenos Aires against Argentina, on a hard, bumpy, pitch which, before the kick-off, caused the England lads to pray for a deluge of rain. Their prayers were answered when, an hour or so before the game, the heavens opened and the heaviest rain I have ever seen in my life descended on Buenos Aires. From the dressing-room window, we watched a hard pitch being turned into a swimming pool, with the depth of water increasing so quickly it looked as if water polo would be the only game the Argentinians could hope to watch that day.

However, 80,000 people were there to see a game of football,

and the referee—Halifax's Arthur Ellis, incidentally—was determined to let them see it, if that were at all possible.

We kicked off—or rather, swam off—and did our best to play some sort of soccer in ridiculous conditions for about 20 minutes. But it was quite impossible, and abandonment came mercifully before either side had scored a goal.

The South American football fans were not at all happy about this. They decided they had to give someone the benefit of their rage, and the players on both sides were elected as victims. We were pelted with a barrage of anything and everything those frustrated spectators could lay their hands on—the most lethal missiles being oranges, big ones, small ones, hard ones, and a fair percentage of those soft, over-ripe, squelchy, ones which appeared to have been specially saved up in readiness for a soccer riot! I was thankful to seek the sanctuary of the dressing room.

If I am ever asked to nominate the toughest spectators in the world, I fear I shall have to bypass the famous Spion Kop inhabitants at Liverpool's Anfield, and vote for the Argentine mobsters of Buenos Aires—on a rainy day.

In case Liverpool folk should feel snubbed by that opinion I am going to tell a story which proves they still deserve to rank with the toughest and oddest characters in the soccer business.

The incident occurred only last season. It was at Goodison Park, not Anfield, but Liverpudlians are, apparently, equally aggressive whether they support the reds or the blues!

Motivated by no discernible incident, a spectator decided he wanted to play his own part in the Everton *v.* Preston North End match, so he came charging on to the field, made for North End centre-half Harry Mattinson, and aimed a blow at him. Having done so, the interloper sprinted away, but he reckoned without North End's Tommy Docherty. Tommy chased the man for a full 30 yards before bringing him down with the finest rugby tackle seen outside Twickenham last season; the police then took charge.

When the performance was over, one of the Everton players told Harry Mattinson, 'That's just like you. Now the poor so-and-so will probably get a month!'

Poor Harry was flabbergasted. He had done absolutely nothing . . . except to accept a vicious 'fourpenny one' from the invader of the pitch!

It reminds me of the time George Thompson played his first

game for Preston North End in the Spion Kop goal at Anfield. When he tipped a ball over the crossbar into the packed Kop crowd, he ran behind the net to retrieve it. The crowd did not seem to be in a hurry to return the ball, so George said, 'I'll come down and get it.' Back came a shout in vintage 'Scouse' accent, 'If you do, you'll not get back on that pitch!' A relevant comment from me to end this chapter, would be: 'You can collect all sorts of injuries at soccer . . .'

CHAPTER 13

The day I flopped in the FA Cup Final.

ONE of the questions constantly asked of well-known sportsmen is, 'What was your greatest moment?' Another is, 'What was your biggest disappointment?' This part of my story is concerned, not with any great event in my life, but with my biggest flop—the Cup Final of 1954.

Preston North End cruised through the third, fourth and fifth rounds of the competition like a team with a mission to fulfil at Wembley Stadium. Drawn away to Derby County, we won 2—0: another away draw at Lincoln City brought another 2—0 victory, and in the fifth round we played our first tie at Deepdale, beating Ipswich Town 6—1.

One more match had to be won for a precious place in the semi-final draw—and that game was against Leicester City at Filbert Street. This was certainly no easy thing; North End needed all the confidence gained from those earlier rounds to scrape a 1—1 draw. The replay at home was no simpler, the result being a second draw; this time the score was 2—2. On we went for a third meeting with the troublesome Leicester boys, on Sheffield Wednesday's ground at Hillsborough. At last North End were able to clear the sixth-round hurdle, a 3—1 win taking us through to a semi-final meeting with Sheffield Wednesday at Maine Road, Manchester.

We beat the Wednesday 2—0, with Charlie Wayman and Jimmy Baxter getting the vital goals we needed to take us to Wembley. We had reached the end of the road; the players had achieved the ambition of every man who ever kicked a football in England; we had qualified for the FA Cup Final.

It was a wonderful feeling, not only for the players, but also for our loyal supporters, the directors, the dozens of backroom boys whose names are never mentioned but whose contributions mean so much to the success of a football club, and above all, for our manager Scott Symon. The boss was in his very first season in Football League management, yet in a few short months

he had taken his team to Wembley—a job others spend a lifetime over, often without success.

Scott Symon was not the most popular of managers, because he never went out of his way to make himself popular. He was concerned only with the performances of the eleven footballers under his control, and spared little time for anything, or anyone, else. Often abrupt with the Press, he would never court publicity, and in the circumstances had few friends in the newspaper world. Was Scott Symon an 'awkward type'? Certainly not. I believe he is one of the nicest persons I have met in the game, and I know, from experience, that he is a first-class manager and was well liked by all the players at Preston.

He was determined to nurse me during the five weeks between Semi-final and Final, in fact he did not want me to play at all in case I should aggravate a thigh muscle which had been pulled in one of the Leicester City cup-ties.

This was to be my first visit to Wembley as a member of a Cup Final team, but I found myself wishing it would be my last. All the stories I had heard about home life being turned upside down when players reach the Final were true. If anything, the chaos was even greater than I had expected.

Pandemonium reigned in the Finney homestead, with the telephone ringing all through the day and the night. Life was not worth living, because I am certain I received calls from every individual I had ever met, plus hundreds more from complete strangers. They were all after precious tickets, of course, but I could do little to help them. The allocation to each competing club is pitifully inadequate, yet no matter how many people complain about this injustice, the FA still refuses to make concessions. If the capacity of England's largest football stadium is 100,000, then at least 60,000 of the spectators who go to watch the Cup Final there should be supporters of the clubs playing in the match. Take the Cup Final label away from a match between, say, Preston North End and West Bromwich Albion, and the promotors would be only too eager to sell as many tickets as possible to the followers of the teams!

Our opponents in 1954 were actually West Brom. In the League they were showing a clean pair of heels to all clubs, and it seemed as if only Preston North End—at Wembley—could cheat the Albion of the 'impossible' double of League and Cup. Then, between the Semi-final and the Final, their fortunes suffered an

34. (*Top left*) One of the early pictures of Tom Finney, taken in 1940 when he played as a guest for Bolton Wanderers

(*Top right*) After the 1954 Cup Final at Wembley, stage and film star Norman Wisdom joined the Finneys for this picture. On either side of Norman are Joe and Beatrice Finney and Elsie and Tom

36. (*Bottom*) Water polo? No, soccer! A particularly wet day at Stamford Bridge sees the author beating his opponent and ploughing through a huge puddle. The ball is at Finney's feet . . . believe it or not

37. The author shaking hands with the Queen Mother—Wembley Cup Final, May 1954

astonishing slump. The injury list grew week by week, and match after match was lost: in fact West Brom. amazingly lost six and drew two of their closing ten League fixtures. Yet, despite this disastrous spell, they still managed to finish runners-up in the League to Wolves . . . clear evidence that the double had been theirs for the taking. I believe they would have done it had it not been for injuries.

On the night before the big game, I was the guest of honour at a very important gathering, the annual dinner of the Football Writers' Association. The most coveted individual award in football was to be presented to me, as a result of my being declared top of the voting lists as 'Footballer of the Year'. The chairman of the Association was Jack Orange, and I was a very proud man when he handed me the statuette with my name inscribed on it. When one footballer is chosen from the thousands who play the game, it is indeed a tremendous honour. I did not dream, at that time, that four years later I should again be voted 'Footballer of the Year', the only player ever to be thus honoured twice.

I was thinking, that night, about Wembley, about West Bromwich Albion, and about the chances of adding a cup-winner's medal to my statuette.

The match itself was something of an anti-climax, and I pass that judgment in no spirit of sour grapes simply because Preston North End were the losers. Most onlookers agreed that it was one of the most disappointing finals ever to be played at the famous Empire Stadium. Two good footballing sides took the field, and ninety minutes later, left it without revealing any of the football of which they were undoubtedly capable. My own performance was awful, and I can only assume that my game, like that of so many others, suffered because of the tense Wembley atmosphere. At no time was I able to produce my normal form, a most disappointing state of affairs when my team mates were expecting something special from me to celebrate the big occasion.

It was not that I was nervous. Excited, slightly tensed up, perhaps—but not nervous. There is something about the Cup Final which defies description, some magic which suggests to the player that he will either live, or die, in the ninety minutes ahead of him. Perhaps it is the knowledge that there can be only one bite at the cherry in the Cup Final: failure on this occasion brings no second, or third, chance.

Most of the Preston team were on edge, but I cannot believe

that this was responsible for the disappointments which were to follow. I think young Bobby Foster was the most nervous player in the side—yet he had a better game than any other forward. Charlie Wayman and George Thompson seemed very excited. Tommy Docherty was laughing and joking—as he always does before a game—and, oddly enough, the most composed man in the room was the least experienced, Australian Joe Marston. Joe just sat on the bench, ice-cool, looking almost bored at the prospect of going up the tunnel to perform in front of 100,000 spectators.

I remember every incident of note in the match, and indeed might as well have been a spectator myself for all the damage I did to the Albion defence. There was no fire and no zest in my performance, and it was just my luck to be up against an inspired Len Millard, who played a 'blinder' of a game for West Bromwich.

Ronnie Allen opened the scoring, but Angus Morrison equalized with a header . . . the end of the first-half scoring. Both teams went to the dressing rooms convinced they would play at least 100 per-cent better after the break.

North End took the lead in the second half with a goal that appeared offside to about 99,999 of those who saw it, but despite the most vigorous protests from angry Albion players, referee Arthur Luty decided the goal would stand. Perhaps it was justice that the Albion were awarded a penalty kick, after Tom Docherty brought down Ray Barlow when Ray was boring in towards our goal. Allen scored from the penalty spot.

That was 2—2, and with the minutes fast ticking away, it looked odds-on extra time would be played. Two minutes from the end, the match was won, and lost, when Frank Griffin, the West Bromwich right-winger, shot under George Thompson's body from a narrow angle to score the deciding goal.

I make no excuses for my greatest-ever flop. I had no mystery injury which hampered my performance, in fact I felt as fit as I have ever done. **The first of May 1954 at Wembley Stadium simply wasn't my day.**

I quote from the *Playfair Football Annual* of 1954–55: 'Preston's disappointment was the man from whom they expected so much —Finney. He could do nothing of account on a day when he so desperately wanted things to go right.'

They can say that again!

CHAPTER 14

Matthews or Finney? I would rather not play for my country than endure this campaign . . . Matthews is written off in 1948!

IF I were England's sole international selector, Stanley Matthews would have been in the 1958 World Cup party in Sweden. I know he is an old man by normal soccer standards, but nobody should ever attempt to compare Stanley Matthews with the ordinary mortals of football. He is a law unto himself, the Peter Pan of the game, the ageless artist who, shrugging aside gratuitous annual advice to retire, is still with us . . . **and playing as well as ever.**

Selectors forgot one vital point when they announced their forty 'possibles' for the trip to Sweden, and did not include Matthews. They forgot that you cannot write off a genius. That mistake has been made by others, and they have all been proved bad judges. As long ago as the 1946–47 season, the *Daily Mail* asked, 'Has Stanley Matthews played his last game for England? Few players have had such a long run at the pinnacle of fame . . . Tom Finney has now made Matthews' place his own.' Yes, twelve years ago, Matthews had manifestly had a 'long run'; who could have guessed that all his greatest days lay before, and not behind, him?

The *Daily Express* report of the 1948 Scotland *v.* England game at Hampden Park suggested that the Scots had seen the last of Stanley Matthews as a power in international soccer. How could they have known that, *seven years later*, Stanley was to be the architect of one of the most humiliating hidings ever inflicted by an English team on Scotland?

With monotonous regularity, for twelve long years, Matthews has been declared by this critic or that to be 'past his best'. Yet only last season, his display for Blackpool against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge was described by many London spectators as one of his greatest-ever matches. Why is everyone so keen to write off this wonderful footballer? That remains a mystery, but I should imagine the usually placid Stanley is very annoyed about it.

A player of Matthews' ability is always measured by his own very high standards, and although that is a great tribute to him it does tend to draw attention to his occasional poor games. An ordinary footballer can have his off-day and nobody will take a lot of notice, but let Stanley Matthews lose form for ninety minutes, and it becomes a big story, big enough even to bring forth the suggestion that he should consider retirement!

Another tribute to Blackpool's Wizard of Dribble is the way full-backs get the headline treatment when they have useful games against him. Reasonable success for a full-back becomes something akin to a miraculous performance when that success is achieved against Stanley.

No other player in the history of the game has had more stopping plans formulated for his personal benefit, and none has shattered those plans so simply with a flick, a shuffle, and a sprint, leaving a helpless opponent to ponder just what went wrong. Matthews is, above all, completely unorthodox: that is why he is so impossible to legislate against.

Would Brazil, or Russia, or Austria have been able to fathom the Matthews mystery had he been in an England shirt in Gothenburg? I know I still would certainly prefer to have him on my side than playing against me. And I am not concerned if he is fifty years old!

A question I am often asked is 'What was Stan Matthews' finest match?' There have been so many fantastic performances, I still cannot decide which could be called his greatest.

I remember his brilliant display in Brussels in 1948 when England beat Belgium 5—3, his merciless humiliation of German left-back Kohlmeyer (who, I'm told, has not been the same man since!) when England beat Germany 3—1 at Wembley in 1954; his similar riddling of a full-back—Yugoslavia's Stankovic—on the same ground a couple of years later, when a memorable photograph was taken showing the bemused Stankovic, beaten for the umpteenth time, with both arms clutched around Stanley's legs realizing that this was the only possible way he could halt the magician. Then there was the previously mentioned 7—2 England victory over Scotland at Wembley, and of course, the 'Matthews Cup Final' of 1953 when Bolton Wanderers were torn apart by the wizardry of the great man.

Even after his most loyal admirers were resigned to the fact that Matthews had played his last game for England, he stepped

in to take my place at outside-right against Brazil in 1956, and proceeded to lay on the match-winning goals against the great Nilton Santos. Like so many of his greatest displays, the comeback against Brazil was staged at the Empire Stadium, Wembley. With the touch of the true showman, Stan Matthews invariably reserved his magnificent moments for the showplace of soccer.

What sort of a man *is* this footballing legend called Matthews? Few people could answer that question, because Stan in his modest, quiet, unassuming, way is not the sort of person with whom one gets familiar. Travelling in a train or a plane, he likes to hide behind a book, always keeping in the background—the silent, scientist of soccer.

I know him better than most, because I have had the pleasure of sharing hotel rooms with Stanley on several international trips. He has a fantastic love of football, and is so completely wrapped up in the game that he would often sit for hours chatting away about it. Yet the same man, away from the privacy ofhis room, might not say a dozen words to anyone in a whole morning. Some might consider him aloof, but they do him less than justice. The only reason for Stanley's reserved manner is probably an inherent shyness. Despite his amazing ability, I have never once heard him try to tell anyone how this game should be played. Yet he has given his life to football, sacrificing more than most people realize so that he can retain his fantastic fitness, which makes nonsense out of his birth certificate. He has so much to tell the world about football, but Stanley Matthews is far too modest to imagine that his methods should be followed by every young player in the game. And he does not talk about them.

These remarks might indicate that I am something of a Matthews fan. I certainly am, and do not mind admitting as much.

Yet there was a time when the mere mention of his name used to make me shudder, and wish that Stanley Matthews had never even embarked on a career as a professional footballer!

The trouble started when I first gained a place in the England international team, a great honour for me, but an honour which was never unanimously applauded by the public or the football writers. So the Matthews-Finney controversy started. The newspapers lapped it up, knowing well that every dig aimed at me would sell their papers in Blackpool and every shot fired at Stanley would sell them in Preston!

The correspondence columns were devoted entirely to the issue:

should Matthews or Finney be England's outside-right? At first I tried to ignore the controversy, but eventually it played havoc with my nerves. Every time I took the field I was being compared with a soccer superman, and that is too much to expect from any player, especially one just trying to find his feet in the international arena.

I shall never forget the weight on my shoulders during the time I kept a living legend out of the England side. 'What right has Finney to be selected in place of Matthews?', asked one newspaper. 'Finney, the blue-eyed boy of the FA,' screamed another. I began almost to feel guilty about being selected, and at one time, was actually hoping to be dropped if it would relieve me of the mental strain. When a man wants to be dropped by his country, he really is in a bad way. Looking back now, I realize just what the campaign did to me.

Whenever I put on my England shirt, I knew before the start of the match that I was going to be heavily criticized afterwards if I had an ordinary ninety minutes. I do not think the Press were really anti-Finney: they just got a kick out of renewing the Matthews-Finney controversy by campaigning for the recall of the master.

The thing which really did get my back up was the repeated suggestion that I was trying to copy the Matthews style of soccer. The charge levelled at me was that I had originally been picked by England as a direct type of winger, but I had later tried to ape Stanley Matthews by playing a holding game. I should like to make it quite clear, while I have this opportunity, that I have never tried to copy Stanley, or any other footballer for that matter. My style, such as it is, belongs to Tom Finney: it is not, and never has been, the Matthews style.

The compromise was eventually discovered when room was found by the England selectors for both Stan and me: that seemed to please everyone, although I was never asked how I felt about being moved from my club position of outside-right to the unfamiliar left-wing. I would be honoured to be picked in any position for my country, but must admit that after one of my poorest left-wing games (it was against Germany at Wembley) I asked a colleague in the dressing room, 'Why don't they switch Stanley to the left for a change!'

It is surprising to reflect that, with so many excellent reasons for us to be deadly enemies, Stanley and I remain the firmest of

football friends. But, with his mild disposition, Stanley Matthews is a very difficult chap for anyone to fall out with, even though he has certain peculiarities which could be misinterpreted.

For instance, you will hardly ever find Stan accepting the hand of friendship after an opponent has deliberately fouled him. Why should he? His reasoning, which seems perfectly sound, is that only a hypocrite wants to shake hands with a man who has whipped his feet from under him. Again, never expect Stanley to wish an opponent 'good luck' before the kick-off—because pre-match good wishes are never genuinely meant. No, there is no falsity, no faking, no hypocrisy about this man Stanley Matthews.

Perhaps he runs a little less now than he used to: perhaps he does not work quite so hard. Yet Stan remains the king of soccer, because forty-five minutes from him is as good as ninety minutes from any other right-winger in England. Indeed I have seen him achieve as much in three minutes as is needed to win a vital game. That is the measure of his genius.

I am proud to salute this wonderful footballer. He is a credit to the game of soccer. Long may he remain in it and retain much loyal goodwill from the public, **even though Press, selectors, and others may not believe in legends, or wizards, or fabulous footballers over forty!**

CHAPTER 15

Star pay for star play . . . the archaic wages system . . . why youngsters are not recruited for big-time football.

BITING the hand that feeds has become a profitable spare-time occupation for professional footballers in recent years: firstly Len Shackleton, and later (along roughly similar lines) Trevor Ford, produced soccer books which were bound to give the reader the impression that Association Football was a most undesirable form of employment for any sports-minded youngster to take up. Many legislators, club directors, trainers, managers, and even fellow players were, at best, incompetent, . . . according to authors Shackleton and/or Ford. Such views of the game might have been expected from players treated unkindly by soccer, yet it is a fact that Len Shackleton and Trevor Ford, through their association with this game, have probably become as wealthy as any pair ever to kick a ball. Let them argue that they owe nothing to soccer, or that their particular talents have long since repaid all the wages, bonuses and other benefits they have received: I still say soccer has been good to them. In the circumstances, Shack and Ford might have been kinder to soccer in their writings.

Of course, every individual is built differently, and in my present position I would feel more than a little hypocritical if I took an almighty kick at soccer in the pages of this book. Football has treated Tom Finney well, and I am not ungrateful. There is so much that is good in this game, and a little that is bad. To emphasize the detrimental points is to distort the overall picture. At the same time, it is wrong to go to the opposite extreme by pretending that all's well with the football world, when obviously it is not.

In this chapter I shall say things which are bound to displease the rulers of the game: to them I make no apologies, beyond the assurance that I have not joined the ranks of the 'knockers'! Every man has a right to criticize, so long as such criticism is substantiated by fact, and so long as constructive ideas go hand in hand with the censure.

No soccer topic causes more argument than the wages earned by professional players. Nothing has inspired so much civil war between the supporters of this or that system, in fact at least a hundred schemes, from the impractical to the ridiculous have been advanced: none has received universal approval.

Need the contents of a man's weekly wage packet cause so much recrimination? Is is necessary to frame involved rules (with suitable punishments if those rules be broken) establishing legislation for pounds, shillings, and pence that may—or may not—be taken home by a footballer to his wife every weekend? I think not. This mountainous mystery could be reduced to molehill minuteness with a simple stroke of legislation. **I believe every man, whether he be footballer, farmer, or foundry-worker, should be paid what he is worth.** Perhaps the very simplicity of this solution has caused the Football Association and Football League to probe continually deeper and deeper, searching for snags.

These bodies have dug diligently, and have managed to unearth a dozen reasons why footballers should not be paid on their ability: in their wisdom, they believe all players—whether good ones or bad—must be subject to a uniform wage scale.

I think they are quite wrong; in fact, their alleged logic is obviously indefensible if we revive the old comparison of an artist like Stanley Matthews being permitted to earn not a penny more than an obscure novice with a Fourth Division club. Imagine Mr Rex Harrison appearing in *My Fair Lady* at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane, for £20-a-week maximum wages (winter only, of course!) Ridiculous? Of course it is. **Yet Stanley Matthews, in his own field, is as great a star as Rex Harrison.** He should be paid accordingly.

I accuse soccer's rule makers of violating every basic principle of economics with their archaic maximum wage restriction. In what other job is an employee forbidden to earn the salary his employer wishes to pay him? That is the present state of affairs in League football, and I am quite certain the only reason it persists is a selfish one. The majority of League clubs could not afford to employ star players in a free market: similarly, of course, the majority of variety theatres could not afford the services of a man like Mr Rex Harrison. So the biggest and best theatres stage the biggest and best shows, because they are fortunate enough to have the resources to do so. In League soccer, we ignore logic, we desert all normal employer-employee negotiation, and we elevate

the Gillinghams, Walsalls and Darlingtons to the same wages status as the Manchester Uniteds, Arsenals, and Sunderlands. Might as well class a local Wigan Rep. theatre with the London Palladium. The Wigan Rep. just could not compete with the London Palladium. **And Torquay United should not try to match their resources with Tottenham Hotspur's. They are not in the same class.**

To justify, or attempt to justify, their maximum wage the Football League point out that football is a team game, and there would be animosity between playing colleagues if one were paid more than another. Surely the stage is as much a team game as soccer? Yet, however much Mr Rex Harrison may value the services of his scene shifters, he would hardly expect them to show truculence because they are not paid a salary similar to his own. Soccer, like the stage, has its stars and its scene shifters, but the artist, in this case, must be paid no more than the artisan.

Another point advanced by the supporters of the maximum wage is the fear that, in a free market, only the biggest and wealthiest of clubs would be able to tempt the greatest players. It would undoubtedly happen, and what is wrong with that anyway? I think Preston North End are the greatest club in the world, but if North End offered me £25 a week and Newcastle United offered me £50, I would certainly sign for Newcastle. Fair shares for all is an admirable maxim, but the very fact that they possess better financial, and other, resources, should entitle a club like Newcastle United to sign better footballers than a club with inferior resources.

I have discussed this point recently with the England team manager Walter Winterbottom, and while he seemed to agree with me about star pay for star play, he would not vote personally for the complete abolition of the maximum wage.

Walter fears the no-maximum would encourage the emergence of a club in England comparable to Spain's Real Madrid, a club which might be tempted to pay a wage as high as £100 a week, in a ruthless, irresistible, drive to sign the man, or men, required. That is why the England manager feels a better compromise would be a maximum, but a high one: perhaps something in the region of £40 weekly. That would introduce the much-needed 'class distinction', and at the same time give up to twenty of our leading clubs a reasonable chance of bidding for whatever talent is available.

With a £40 a week maximum, it would be economically impossible for two-thirds of the League clubs to pay the same wages as their better-placed brethen forming the minority one-third. In time, some thirty-odd clubs would become established as the aristocrats of English League soccer. The door would then be open for a completely new, and much improved, League set-up which, although hardly a 'super' League, would at least possess the virtue of assembling the best talent in no more than two strong, compact, divisions. Under the arrangement at present in force, too little talent is being dissipated among too many clubs.

Obviously the next question to be resolved is the membership of the First and Second 'star' divisions. Which clubs should be favoured? Which should get marching orders? Why not be ruthless and allocate places to the most deserving clubs—assessed on playing results and average attendances during the past twenty years or so?

It is indeed an intriguing prospect, and I visualize a First Division on the lines of:

Arsenal
Aston Villa
Birmingham City
Bolton Wanderers
Chelsea
Everton
Leicester City
Liverpool
Manchester City
Manchester United
Newcastle United
Nottingham Forest
Portsmouth
Sheffield Wednesday
Sunderland
Spurs
West Bromwich Albion
Wolves

The Second Division would be:

Blackburn Rovers
Blackpool
Bristol City
Bristol Rovers
Burnley
Cardiff City
Charlton Athletic
Derby County
Fulham
Ipswich Town
Leeds United
Luton Town
Middlesbrough
Notts County
Preston North End
Sheffield United
Stoke City
West Ham United

Revolutionary? Maybe, but those thirty-six relatively wealthy clubs already dominate the Football League, proving that class cannot be denied no matter how strenuously the League attempt to bring equality to ninety-two assorted teams.

I trust my suggestion that Preston North End ought to be in the Second Division does not cause a riot at Deepdale! If four up and four down promotion and relegation operated, the original allocation would never remain static.

While it would be desirable to isolate the thirty-six 'aristocrats', provision could also be made for the dismissal of those who failed to make the grade, their places to be taken by other potential 'star' clubs like Norwich City, Port Vale, Millwall, Coventry City, Plymouth Argyle, or Huddersfield Town. These 'outsiders' would compete in a Third Division, of not more than eighteen clubs, but unlike the present set-up, would not enjoy automatic promotion to the ranks of the top thirty-six until all their credentials had been thoroughly examined.

The advantages of my scheme are:

(1) A stronger League of two divisions would mean the concentration of our limited resources, and therefore a much higher standard of football.

(2) The breaking of the hobbles which force the thoroughbreds to proceed at the same pace as the selling platers.

(3) Class distinction which, without being snobbish about it, I feel to be essential in soccer, would be evident.

Compare the disadvantages:

(1) The relegation, which could be temporary, of clubs like Scunthorpe United, Swansea Town, and Rotherham United. Regrettable, perhaps, but could they advance any real claims for inclusion in the top thirty-six?

(2) The disappearance—as far as the Football League is concerned—of clubs like Barrow, Gateshead, Southport, Torquay United, and Gillingham. Would they be missed? I doubt it!

My plan would drastically cut the League membership from ninety-two clubs to fifty-four, but it has been obvious for years that there are not enough good footballers in the country to supply ninety-two League teams.

It has been just as obvious that supporters of at least one third of the League clubs do not deserve, nor do they desire, first-class League football. Their very reluctance to keep the turnstiles

moving on a Saturday should cause them to forfeit their status.

These suggestions, while perhaps appearing to be out of context with the overall wages problems, are extremely relevant because they do offer a compromise between the 'survival of the fittest' creed—regarded by some as too drastic—and the system now in operation which is virtually subsidization (through the maximum-wage handicap) of the minnows by the mighty.

The reader might ask why, at my time of life, I am so concerned about the money which should be paid to professional footballers. To them I would say that the future of football in England depends entirely on our efforts to attract youngsters of skill into the game. The profession must be made attractive, as it was in pre-war days, if it is to entice talented boys professionally. Before 1939, the country endured frequent waves of unemployment, and even those fortunate enough to enjoy consistent employment in industry, had to work long hours for an average national wage of something below £4 a week. In comparison, a professional footballer, with his undeniably congenial job, was a very happy man on his £8 a week maximum.

The picture has changed. Unemployment, thank heavens, is no longer prevalent, while in many branches of industry, very large wage packets are taken home for comparatively short working hours.

Meanwhile the professional footballer, though still enjoying a pleasant form of employment, finds himself faced with a trebled cost of living, and at the same time sees his hopes of a £20 a week, all the year round, maximum wage rejected by the Football League. Of course he is far better off than his predecessor of twenty years ago, but much worse off if we compare his status in society to that of an ordinary workman.

When I was a kid of sixteen or seventeen, I would have given my right arm for the opportunity of being signed as a professional footballer by Preston North End, or Blackburn Rovers, or any other club in the League. Today demand has obviously exceeded supply, which is why, instead of youngsters queueing up to join clubs, it is the team managers who queue for the signature of any boy showing something above average ability at soccer.

The chief scout of a famous club in the North saw a useful seventeen-year-old playing for a colliery team, and asked him if he'd like to sign as a professional. The boy enquired what his wages would be (this was only a few years ago) and was told, 'To

start with, about £7 a week.' Back came the answer, 'I can earn double that by going down the pit.' So another potential Raich Carter or Wilf Mannion was lost to first-class football. Is it suprising that, with these circumstances prevailing, clubs find it difficult to tempt young players of class into the professional game?

Without probing too deeply, a League player might appear to bein a very happy position financially. He gets his £20 a week in the season, and £17 a week in the summer, plus bonuses for winning or drawing, plus a benefit of £750 every five years, plus a lump sum from the Provident Fund when he retires, plus £50 for every international game, plus, at times, quite large sums of money for newspaper articles, or advertisements.

Remember, though, that only a very small percentage of footballers are lucky enough to represent their country; in the general picture that £50 is non-existent. Ignore, too, the articles and advertisements. That money comes not from soccer, but from outside sources, and in any case, the number of players who benefit to any extent could be counted on the fingers of two hands. Benefits, too, are never obligatory and, in fact, are often non-existent.

We are still left with a handy wage packet and a pleasant form of employment, but the 64,000 question is, 'How long does it last?'

It was once calculated that the average career life of a professional footballer was no more than seven years. Let us veer to the generous side and call it ten years. It is still a terribly brief interlude in a man's lifetime, especially if we consider that, as a full-time professional, he equips himself with no background to fit him for a trade when he ceases to kick a ball about, in his thirties (or even earlier).

In theory, he must earn enough in ten years to give him a reasonable start in business when he hangs up his boots. He does not ask for the moon, merely some security for his wife and family when his playing days are over. That security is being denied him at present!

An outside job, in conjunction with his football career, could be the answer—as it was in my case—but many clubs, for excellent reasons, will not tolerate part-time players, even though those players do manage to devote the requisite time to training, and travelling to away matches.

A considerable rise in the wages a player may earn during his playing career—even if such a rise were awarded in non-negotiable premium bonds!—would give him the security he seeks. I say the wages a player *may* earn, because it does not automatically follow that an all-round increase would follow the lifting of the maximum wage. Some players are grossly underpaid, others are paid more than they are worth. Some would certainly be worse off if they negotiated their own contracts and were paid on ability alone, but those who proved themselves worthy of high wages would get them, which is as it should be.

Older players, some of the great names of pre-war vintage, will no doubt point out that in their day, there was no such thing as security, but surely that does not mean the modern player is wrong to desire it? I know, from conversations with my playing colleagues, that the one problem uppermost in the minds of them all is: what does the future hold? They worry constantly about injury, or illness, or even loss of form, robbing them of their chosen livelihood while they are still young men. Blessed with exceptional ability and supreme fitness, they can still find themselves thrown on the soccer slag heap if unfortunate enough to collect a tap on the knee or a troublesome ankle.

To be a successful professional footballer for even ten years, a player must be assured of a clean bill of health—and nobody is in a position to guarantee that. But with the right sort of financial incentive, more ambitious youngsters would take the gamble and throw the security of a staid, pensionable job overboard.

Given the opportunity (not the guarantee, remember) of earning something around £20,000 in a career of ten years or more, the supply of good, young, professional footballer aspirants would be doubled, perhaps even trebled. Such rewards would attract boys from every type of family; yes, even from the public schools and universities, and what a shot in the arm that would be for the game. With such a flow of talent available, England would very quickly be in a position to challenge Brazil and the rest of the world—and beat them in the World Cup. League attendances would soar, because great players and great teams have never failed to draw great gates.

Perhaps, too, we would be spared one of the most tragic sights in soccer—the pitiful efforts of aged former stars to play on 'for just one more season', simply because they have nothing different to which they can turn. These men in their late thirties and early

forties drift on free transfers from club to club, playing in an inferior League season by season, until they eventually reach the stage when no club wants them. It is sad to watch them striving to recapture their long-departed glory, when it is obvious to everyone that they should have given up the struggle years previously.

How much better if such players could retire gracefully when their legs tell them to do so, retire secure in the knowledge that their living no longer depends on their ability to keep running for ninety difficult-to-endure minutes.

I am often asked if I would wish my boy to become a professional footballer. My answer? Certainly, so long as he had another trade as a safeguard. Professional football is a wonderful career . . . **providing you are not entirely dependent upon it.**

After twenty-one years in the game, I can honestly say I have enjoyed every single year. There have been so many wonderful trips abroad, the 'work' has not been difficult, indeed I still enjoy my game of football as much as I did in my teens, and the financial gain has been considerable. I have been one of the lucky ones, but that does not prevent me from sympathizing with those less fortunate.

Professionals in other branches of sport are very much better off than footballers. A cricketer negotiates his own contract with his county, and many have first-class careers lasting from their twentieth birthdays to the ripe old sporting age of forty-five or even fifty. Boxers, like footballers, are liable to lose their living at a moment's notice, but unlike footballers, they can be assured of very big money if, and when, they are at the top of their profession.

Cricket is badly supported, but it is still possible for a topliner like Cyril Washbrook, Len Hutton or Denis Compton to pocket a tax-free testimonial nest egg of five figures, while the great names of soccer like Billy Wright and Nat Lofthouse get their £750 (less tax).

It does seem as if our sense of values has been grossly distorted if we compare the money football—not outside earnings—has given to Stanley Matthews, with the yield provided by cricket to Cyril Washbrook. It would be difficult to state exactly how many spectators pay to see Stanley Matthews in a season, but it would certainly be at least a million and a half. A star cricketer like Washbrook might be watched by 100,000 in a dry season! There is no comparison at all, yet we still tolerate colossal tax-free

benefits for performers at cricket, and paltry pittances for the big names of thriving soccer.

Yes, believe it or not, soccer is still thriving. When clubs are able to dip into their bank accounts and pay as much as £35,000 for a single footballer, there is plenty of cash in the game.

I do hope these views of mine do not suggest there is some sort of a chip on my shoulder; in fact as I wrote earlier, I thoroughly enjoy my game of football because it still is a game quite apart from being a profession. And I am sure those sentiments are shared by ninety-nine per cent of professional players, even those who, for one reason or another, have to spend so much of their time playing in reserve teams far removed from the glamour of the big occasion.

It was Jimmy Guthrie, the former chairman of the Players' Union, who first called us 'soccer slaves', and although Jimmy was theoretically correct—basing his statement on the hopelessly one-sided players' contract—this particular form of 'slavery' has little in common with the accepted use of the word. Indeed several players have confessed to me, 'I wish I could be a slave until I'm seventy!'

How much better though, if the rulers of soccer would wipe away for ever the slur of 'slavery'. It could be done by allowing each footballer to come to an individual agreement with his club. Matt Busby, progressive-minded manager of Manchester United, has advocated this idea. So has Stanley Seymour of Newcastle United, who once wrote in a newspaper article, 'I want to see the day when a player can make his own wage agreement with his club for the best terms he can get. If he is an international or a real drawing power, then let us bump up his pay packet.'

The words 'let us' sound almost like a plea—and that is most significant. There are many clubs in England who are anxious to pay their players exactly what they believe they are worth, even if such a system cost them as much as £50 a week for a top-line international star. It is wrong, in my opinion, for the League—dominated by its hard-up members—to prevent the wealthy clubs spending their own money as they desire.

It is ridiculous when players can go to clubs outside the League and pick up more money than those in the First Division. I know several cases where this has happened. It is all wrong—especially if we compare the hours put in by League and NON-League footballers and the big difference in attendances at matches.

A club like Wisbech can outbid Wolves for a player's services. The whole idea is ludicrous—**yet it happens.**

A professional footballer, especially one who earns recognition from his country, is a specialist. That point is so often overlooked. It is not possible for any Tom, Dick, or Harry to become a great footballer, and when those heights are achieved, the reward should be consistent with the ability required from the player.

Although there are some people who regard the present international match fee of £50 as too lavish, **I do not think it is half enough.** When a player puts on the white shirt of England, it can truly be said that he has reached the very pinnacle of his profession. After all, only eleven players from the thousands eligible receive the coveted honour, and in the circumstances, they should be paid at least £100 apiece in recognition of their status. It is said that, perhaps, Wales or Ireland could not afford this £100 'touch', but their financial problems are of no concern to England. If the England players received £100 a match, have no fear there would be any necessity to mortgage the valuable trophies at Lancaster Gate. International match receipts at Wembley have produced as much as £50,000 for a single game, and even with the players' fees raised to £100, the £1,200 required for twelve men would still represent a ridiculously small proportion of the money those twelve had helped to bring in through the turnstiles.

This sort of thinking has caused more than one great player to wonder just who is getting the big money out of soccer. *It is obviously not the men who attract the crowds who benefit.*

Neil Franklin, one of England's finest centre-halves, was universally condemned when he packed his bags and, without a word to anyone, fled to Bogota, the alleged soccer Utopia in South America. I think I know, better than most people, just why Neil disappeared so dramatically.

As if it were yesterday, I recall a conversation I had with Neil at Hampden Park, Glasgow, some twenty minutes or so before the kick-off in the Scotland *v.* England game in April 1950. Just before getting stripped, I strolled along the player's tunnel with Neil to have a pre-match look at the vast crowds packing the Hampden bowl. From the track, it is an amazing sight, with seemingly endless row upon row of bobbing heads filling every inch of this huge stadium.

Neil Franklin, hands in pockets, deep in thought, surveyed the scene slowly, then turned to me and said, 'Look at them, Tom.

There are 125,000 people here and they've paid thousands of pounds to watch you, and me, and the rest of the lads play a game of football. We get £20 each out of it all. It's all wrong, Tom. It doesn't bear thinking about.'

Still engrossed in his thoughts, Neil Franklin retraced his steps back to the dressing room. That was the last game he ever played for England. Within days, Neil was front-page news in the papers of the world: he had left his homeland for a country where he believed he would be paid something more in keeping with his value at the box office. As I read of his sensational departure, I thought again of our Hampden Park conversation.

'It's all wrong, Tom,' he had said. It was all wrong, too . . . and still is, even though the reward for international recognition has jumped to £50. Neil Franklin did not want to leave England. He did not want to take his wife and family to an obscure republic on the South American continent. He had gone there to earn a better living, at a game given to the world by Britain; just as John Charles was to fly to Turin years later to get the sort of money he should have been paid at home. Only by righting the wrongs in our game can we insure against the loss of others like Neil Franklin and John Charles.

Would there be jealousy from club colleagues if one of their number collected his regular £100 for international appearances? After all my games for my country, I think I should be aware of any such animosity if it existed, but to be truthful, it doesn't. Whenever I am capped, the congratulations from my Preston North End colleagues are spontaneous and obviously sincere, just as they are when team mates like Tommy Docherty and Tommy Thompson are honoured. Even when absence on international duty seriously handicaps the club, there is never the slightest suggestion of ill-feeling from directors, manager, or players, although the Deepdale spirit is not evident in every club.

I remember the year Preston finished runners-up on goal average to Arsenal for the First Division Championship. A vital match against Charlton Athletic in that season was missed by Tommy Docherty and myself because of an international engagement. Charlton beat Preston, a result which probably cost us the League title, but nobody suggested that Docherty and Finney were to blame for North End's misfortune.

Few footballers would resent the success of a team mate. For myself, I would be very happy to have ten internationals in the

Preston side, providing they were not all missing on the same day!

If, as I suggest, the payments for international matches were increased to £100, the fee for appearing in the FA Cup Final should be £500 per man. Outrageous? Certainly not. After all, about ninety-five per cent of the players in the game get no nearer to Wembley Stadium than their own television screen, and of the remaining five per cent, only a handful need expect more than one Cup Final appearance in an entire career.

Taking the Aston Villa *v.* Manchester United FA Cup Final as a guide, this one match produced total receipts of £58,025 8*s.* 8*d.* If the Football Association paid twenty-four players £500 each, the money spent on the artists who attracted that £58,025 8*s.* 8*d.* would be £12,000, not an unreasonable percentage of the kitty, by any means.

A point worth mentioning here is the 'racketeering' in precious Cup Final tickets, which increases year by year, and which causes more bitterness among supporters of Cup Final teams than anything else. Let us not hide the facts. Footballers allegedly cash in on the Cup Final, because they realize they will probably have one chance in a lifetime to do so, and because they know their legal reward for a Cup Final appearance is so ridiculously paltry that it defies all logic.

Pay Cup Final players something more in keeping with their value at the turnstile, and they would no longer be faced with the necessity to seek their reward through what might be termed shady channels.

If, in the opinion of some, I have dwelt too long on the complexities of the professional footballer's wage packets, I ask their forgiveness. At the same time, I feel any book dealing with Association football which bypasses this most controversial issue does a disservice, both to the author, and to his reader. So many of the headaches of soccer are caused by muddled wages legislation; so many would be solved with more progressive ideas, even though such ideas might involve a major revolution in the set-up of soccer.

I have always believed that footballers who take a living out of this great game must be prepared to put as much back as entertainers of the public. By the same token, the star who contributes more than the 'ordinary' player, should be repaid accordingly.

Is that unreasonable?

CHAPTER 16

Happy memories after twenty-one years in soccer . . . 'Monty' sends me his autograph . . . what does the future hold?

As my footballing days come to an end—and I realize I cannot go on playing forever—I sometimes wonder what the future holds for the Finney family. Not that I am concerned about finding a job, thank heavens! Our electrical engineering and plumbing business has been built on solid foundations, and barring accidents, it should certainly provide me and mine with a reasonably comfortable living when I leave a football dressing room for the last time.

Yes, I have security, but important as it is, security is not everything. I often think of Joe Mercer, when I look to the future. Like me, Joe was doing well in business (grocery was his particular line) and when he retired from soccer he had no need to concern himself with the headaches and heartaches which seem inseparable from big-time football. Had he wished to retain an interest in this great game, I am sure Joe Mercer could have joined the Board of more than one club: or had he not wanted to team up with the alleged villains of football, the directors, he could probably have enjoyed a worry-free spare-time hobby as a talent scout.

Instead, when the call came to take on a managerial position with Sheffield United, Joe immediately sold his businesses, and with his eyes wide open, accepted a job which has often been referred to as the most thankless in the world . . . *he became a football manager*. Most people were amazed. They said, 'I thought Joe had more sense.' 'Joe must be crackers.' 'Why on earth has Joe done it?'

Bearing in mind the kicks every League club manager must expect, those were normal reactions from the puzzled public. But those really on the inside of soccer were not asking, 'Why has Joe done it?' They knew. Only those who have been in the game for many years, who have sampled its ups and its downs, could appreciate the motives of Joe Mercer—the man who threw security out of the window, and in its place accepted uncertainty, worry,

and strain. Once football is in the blood, it will always remain, no matter how often a transfusion is attempted.

Not for a moment do I contemplate selling my business—but, all the same, I am going to find it very difficult, if not impossible, to cut myself adrift from football when I finish playing. I have said that I would never become a manager: it's such a thankless job, and I often feel that the manager of League football has forgotten how to enjoy his game of football. Enjoyment? More like torture, surely.

At the same time, I do want to stay in soccer and if the only way that can be done is by becoming a manager, then I think I would have a shot . . . providing, of course, some club wanted me! Before stepping into big-time management, though, I should like to prepare myself by serving an apprenticeship in the Third, or even the Fourth, Division, perhaps as an assistant-manager. I know some men like former internationals Matt Busby, Stan Cullis and Cliff Britton, have made the successful jump from playing to top-class management, yet despite their successes, I would feel more confident of doing well if I came up the hard way.

Soccer is such an absorbing business: I really do not think I would be happy out of it. Yet so many who *are* in it, seem desperately unhappy, an understandable state of affairs, of course.

When there are forty managerial changes in a single year, it is quite obvious that this is not the most permanent of jobs. Why do football managers have such a depressingly high mortality rate in their professional capacity? Most people put the entire blame on the directors, and while agreeing that the majority of directors must be held responsible for any trouble with their managers, there are other reasons for the constant switching: the not-very-amusing game of managerial moving chairs isn't the entire responsibility of the men in the boardrooms.

I believe many of the managers of League clubs today have no real qualifications. Some were brilliant footballers, some are adept at administration, some are stern disciplinarians, some have various other qualities. The good manager must have more than one virtue, though. If his judgment of a player is faulty, he could squander thousands of pounds of hard-to-earn cash. If his personality does not command the respect of his players, he is wasting his time. If his methods upset certain players, he cannot hope to have a happy team . . . and an unhappy team should never expect to win anything. Many managers, perhaps even most of them,

are found wanting in different ways, so why should they expect to hold their often well-paid positions?

On the other hand, unless a manager has complete control of all team affairs, it is grossy unfair to blame him when results are poor. Too often directors search for a scapegoat—perhaps to placate irate supporters—and in such cases the man they select as chief 'can carrier' is the manager. These are the guilty directors . . . the ones who make all the decisions and, as soon as those decisions are proved faulty, blame the man who carried out their orders, frequently against his better judgment.

Too many managers are prepared to become big-salaried office boys, sacrificing their soccer souls in return for a monthly cheque, a house at a low rental, and the sight, often a brief sight, of their name on headed notepaper. When more than a hundred hopefuls will apply for a vacancy—even though the club concerned is obviously not interested in appointing a strong manager—they betray their acceptance of a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. They queue up for the honour of becoming stooges!

Although as the struggle for League survival becomes more desperate season by season, managerial casualty lists grow longer and longer, this is not a new fashion bred in recent years. Many years ago—so I am told—Joe Bradshaw, who was manager of Swansea Town, paid £50 for a frail inside-forward called Ivor Jones. An interfering director immediately called on his boardroom colleagues to place a vote of 'no confidence' in the manager, 'because he is signing midgets who could never make the grade.' About five weeks later, the so-called 'midget' partnered Billy Meredith in the Welsh international team. Ivor Jones, by the way, is the father of £35,000 Cliff Jones and the brother of Bryn Jones who was the most expensive player in football before the war.

Only last season the chairman of Exeter City was quoted as saying, 'Managers are now extinct'—but I know the directors of Wolves, Manchester United, Blackburn Rovers or any other really successful team would not agree with him.

The only way to go after success in soccer—and surely every director is chasing that elusive prize—is to start by appointing the *right* club manager. Having done so, this 'Mr Right' should then be given complete control over the training routine, the scouting system, the very important task of selecting the team, and—providing the money is available—the buying and selling of players. If directors have faith in their manager, and respect

his judgment, why should he not be permitted to spend large sums of money while building the team? If the manager needs as much as £30,000 for a single player, and he is convinced the player will prove a good investment, directors should, without hesitation, sign the cheque—if the money is in the club, of course. People may feel that, where such large sums are involved, the manager should not be given sole responsibility: they might say, 'It's not his money, and unlike the directors, he has nothing to lose.' I would not agree. After all, his job, his very livelihood, depends on the wisdom of his decision.

There are bad managers in football: there are bad directors. But, despite opinions to the contrary, we must have managers—and we must have directors (although no doubt many managers would be much happier without them!).

Too much emphasis is placed on the damage done by directors, while not enough is known of the immense good they do, particularly when struggling clubs rely entirely on the philanthropic leanings of their directors to stay in the soccer business. I could name a dozen clubs who would have been unable to honour their players' contracts had it not been for the generosity of directors who not only loan, but also give, money from their own pockets to meet the wages bills.

A true story is told of a manager, a non-drinker, taking over his first club. This new boy at the game met an experienced manager who was a really hard tippler, and was told, 'In this game of football management, you either drink or else you go crackers.'

They met again twelve months later—in a public house. The *former* teetotaller said, 'I'm still quite sane'—knocking back his third double scotch.

I wonder if I would take to the bottle as manager of a football club? I wonder . . . My own plans are, as yet, undecided. But what does the future have hidden away for the game of Association Football in England? Will there be a better deal for managers, players, spectators, yes, even directors in a few years' time? I hope so. We must go forward learning from mistakes of the past, and in this connection, there is one reform which in my opinion is long overdue. I refer to some new efforts to legislate for the young footballer who signs a professional form in haste, fails to make the grade, and regrets at leisure his big mistake.

Boys of seventeen (the minimum permitted age for becoming a

professional) are impressionable, and are so often easy prey for unscrupulous managers who would go to any lengths to obtain a signature on a Football League form. These kids can be persuaded to cast aside an apprenticeship to a trade, and cheerfully jeopardize their entire future, when told of the milk and honey awaiting them as glamorous stars of soccer. **For too many the journey to the promised land becomes a brief, but bumpy, ride to a destination of disillusionment.**

At nineteen, it could be palpably obvious to everyone—and to nobody more than the smooth-tongued operator who signed the boy—that he is not going to be good enough to make his living at the game. With luck, he may fall in for a job, but his career must be affected adversely by those two lost years.

Suppose he wishes to play football, purely for recreation, as an amateur? He will find no place open to him in senior amateur soccer: he may be given a permit to revert to amateur status, but the permit player, in practice, has no real status, being betwixt the heaven and hell of the unpaid and paid game. He bears the stigma of professionalism, even if his 'crime' has been merely the signing of the form. He will be barred from joining a team in, say, the Isthmian or Athenian Leagues, and if he does find a club willing to sign him, that club will be barred from utilizing his services for any FA Amateur Cup-tie.

Why should a boy find himself an outcast, simply because he has been proved not quite strong enough to make professional grade?

My remedy, and this has the support of several influential people in the game, would compel seventeen-year-olds to sign a new type of form, an 'apprentice professional' form, which would last until their nineteenth, or even twentieth birthdays. When the form expired, the young footballer would then either become a full professional, or revert to amateur, 'full' amateur, status.

This idea could be abused if youngsters were permitted to become professionals a second time after they had reclaimed amateur status. That would be a handy way for clubs to pick up £20,000 teenagers without paying a fee: therefore it would be necessary to embody a rule prohibiting reinstated amateurs from ever taking up professional football again. Such a rule would be no hardship.

Let us take another look into the future, and the things I should like to see in soccer. There has been much speculation about the formation of a European League, but inevitably, British clubs

will find it impossible to compete unless they are relieved of a large slice of their present commitments.

Some followers of football think the average professional has an easy job, and while I admit there are many more difficult professions, we are kept going, without much of a break, for nine months of the year. Look at the programme: a minimum of forty-two League matches, plus FA Cup-ties, friendly games, possibly European Cup-ties, and for the stars, international matches and inter-League fixtures. What possible chance would there be of also trying to fit in a European League programme?

We face the alternative of either pruning our present fixture list, or forgetting for ever a European League. I would have no hesitation in slashing the League programme—not only because it would open the door to more international competititon at club level—but because it has been hopelessly congested for years.

Which English clubs should compete in a European League? This would certainly cause trouble, and although the aristocrats of soccer like Arsenal, Spurs, Aston Villa, and Newcastle United —and by aristocrats I mean those with big grounds and very big potential attendances—might feel they had a right to be invited, I would rather see teams with the most successful playing records chosen for this big assignment. For example, if Luton Town won the First Division Championship, and Arsenal finished in the bottom half of the League, then Luton should be nominated—and I don't care how poor their ground may be.

In these days of speedy, safe . . . yes, safe . . . air travel a match between Spurs and Real Madrid, or even Manchester City and Moscow Dynamo, need not be a tedious, lengthy, expedition. *Teams must fly*, and I do not come around to that opinion simply because the passing of time tends to soften the horrible blow of the Munich disaster. I wrote a newspaper article only a few days after the Manchester United disaster in which I said I would have no hesitation in flying . . . anywhere. We cannot put the clock back twenty years.

Air travel is now an essential part of our everyday existence: it would be quite ridiculous if members of one particular profession refused to accept that fact. Anyone who travels a lot must become a fatalist, realizing that all forms of transport involve a certain degree of risk. That risk can only be eliminated when we refuse to leave the shelter of our homes to go anywhere! Accidents happen in trains, in cars, and in ships.

The real advantages of passenger flying were brought home to me on the England close-season soccer tour to Yugoslavia and Russia in the summer of 1958. During that trip, I enjoyed the experience of flying from Budapest to Moscow in a Soviet jet airliner, the TU 104. The plane carried about a hundred people 1,000 miles in exactly two hours. Had we been 'old fashioned' enough to shun air travel, we would have spent a whole day and a night in reaching the Russian capital. There is no comparison at all.

I know I shall play no active part in the greatest days of Association Football, because I am optimistic enough to maintain that these all lie *before* us—as the world becomes smaller and the game spreads ever farther afield. But I shall always have my memories of good matches and bad; of wonderful experiences on, and off, the field; of journeys to distant lands which, without my footballing ability, I should never have been able to undertake: yet, perhaps, my happiest memories will be of the thousands of nice folk, many of them famous men and women, to whom soccer has introduced me.

I know I shall never forget a surprise meeting I had with a very distinguished visitor in the dressing room at Hampden Park, Glasgow. It was half-time in the 1948 Scotland *v.* England match. A knock came on the door, and in walked Field Marshal Montgomery. 'Monty' came over to me and said, 'Congratulations on scoring that goal. It was a fine effort, for a man who fought with me in the Eighth Army.' I didn't know what to say. I certainly had been in the Eighth Army Campaign, and had seen the Field Marshal several times—but the first chance I ever had of actually talking to him was in the Hampden dressing room. And I did not know what to say!

The following week a letter arrived at my Preston home. It read:

'My dear Finney,

'I was delighted to meet you at Glasgow yesterday, and especially to see you score England's first goal. May you score many more.

'I send you my programme of the match which I have signed. Also a photograph you may care to have.

Montgomery of Alamein,
Field Marshal.'

The photograph of 'Monty', wearing his familiar beret, bore the inscription: 'T. Finney, left-wing for England at Hampden Park, 10th April, 1948. Scored England's first goal.' It was signed personally by Viscount Montgomery.

That picture holds a place of honour in my home. It means as much to me as all my caps, medals, and trophies . . . because it was a present from a great man who happens to love a game of football.

There are others like the gallant Field Marshal. There are so many people associated with this wonderful game who are nice to know. It has been a pleasure and a privilege to meet them all.

If I may be presumptuous enough to close with a word of advice to the young men who are, at this moment, embarking on a career in soccer, I would tell them: 'Learn to be good losers as well as good winners. No matter how good you are, or imagine you are, you cannot win every battle.'

To those who will bear the international burden in the many World Cup tournaments facing England in the future, I would have slightly different advice: 'May you learn from the lessons we've been taught. Let us see you become good winners, for a change. Let us see you succeed, where we have failed.'

I wish them all the best of luck.

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